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Standard

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THE CASE FOR CENSORSHIP

by David Lowenthal

WITH COMMENTS BY:

William J. Bennett

Terry Eastland

Irving Kristol

Jeremy Rabkin

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Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)", in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians" and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories". In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millenium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem", let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem".

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem".

"Settlements". When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews) – the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements", with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements", too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

"Refugees". In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees – by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps", so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians", the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million(!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war.

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Collaborating with a Killer

A day after wounding four children and a 68-year-old woman in an attack on a Jewish Community Center in the San Fernando Valley, then killing a postman as he fled, white supremacist Buford Furrow gave himself up in a Las Vegas FBI office. According to an AP story citing an FBI source, Furrow said "he wanted this to be a wake-up call to America to kill Jews." Those inflammatory words understandably made headlines across the country.

But what The Scrapbook is wondering is: *Why do we know this?* Anyone who looks at the venue of the crime, the victims chosen, and the method of the attack can put two and two together and guess at Furrow's motives. Why did the FBI see fit to provide a platform—however second-hand—for the views of someone who 24 hours before had tried to murder half a dozen people *as a way to gain a hearing for his views?*

We tend to think that a man in custody for attempting a mass murder forfeits his right to hold a press conference. Why should the FBI, or any law enforcement agency for that matter, pass along to the media a murderer's call-to-arms? Enthusiasts for the president's anti-hate-crimes agenda should pay closer attention to this episode: Do they really think it well advised for politically astute police agencies to torque up the drama of such crimes—to, in effect, serve as a public-relations conduit for the likes of Furrow and other extremist killers?

Furrow, it's worth remembering, committed his crime in a state that has the death penalty (and committed an act of terrorism, which subjects him to the federal death penalty), fled to another state that has the death penalty (and in so doing crossed state lines, which exposes him, again, to the federal death penalty). Surely this arsenal of potential punishments is sufficient. Months from now, the man will have his day in court, and interested parties can hear from him then. Is it too much to ask that we not hear any more from him *until* then?

Bomb Him with Fax Machines?

Congress last year appropriated $8 million to assist the anti-Saddam opposition in Iraq. Will it surprise you to learn that the Clinton administration has unaccountably failed to do anything useful with the money? The principal backers of the Iraq Liberation Act—a bipartisan group that includes Trent Lott, Joseph Lieberman, Jesse Helms, and Bob Kerrey—wrote to the president last week to complain. Here, writ small, is a devastating indictment of this administration's foreign policy frivolity:

> To date, of the $8 million appropriated to assist the opposition, less than $500,000 has been used to support activities carried out by the opposition. Most of the rest of this money is being spent on such things as academic conferences, community outreach projects, and conflict management programs that will do little or nothing to expedite the demise of Saddam's regime. Notwithstanding these expenditures, we understand that as much as $1 million of this aid may be returned to the Treasury at the end of this fiscal year. Further, the opposition has received no assistance whatsoever from the $97 million in military assistance made available under the Iraq Liberation Act. The Administration has begun to plan an initial drawdown under the Iraq Liberation Act, but has signaled Saddam that he has nothing to fear by emphasizing that the drawdown will be 'non-lethal' in nature. Reportedly it will include photocopiers, computers, and fax machines, as well as training in such areas as accounting and flood management. *In providing authority for military drawdown, it was our intention to train and equip a force dedicated to bringing democracy to Iraq.*

The italics, needless to say, are not The Scrapbook's, but the frustrated senators'.

Jiang Zemin, Our "Strategic Partner"

"Beijing, Aug. 9—The Chinese Communist Party has asked its members to study a new book entitled 'Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin Discuss Materialism and Atheism.'"

—*Agence France Presse*

Libel-Proof Kevorkian

The Michigan State Court of Appeals did something admirable last week: It dismissed a libel suit brought by Jack Kevorkian against the Michigan State Medical Society and the American Medical Association for pub-

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Scrapbook

lishing essays calling him a "killer" back in 1996.

Libel suits, the court pointed out, should be dismissed "where an allegedly libelous statement cannot realistically cause impairment of reputation because the person's reputation is already so low." And in the case of Kevorkian—who has supervised more than 130 "suicides" and was finally convicted this year of second-degree murder—the reputation has fallen to the point where, on "the issue of assisted suicide, plaintiff is virtually 'libel proof.'"

But THE SCRAPBOOK shouldn't let this praise-the-courts thing get out of hand. The Michigan judges didn't say Kevorkian is libel proof because he truly is a killer; that seemed much too bold. No, they decided instead that his, um, "actions" have made him a public figure and you can't easily libel public figures: Kevorkian's "very celebrity (or notoriety, if you will) derives exclusively from his participation in a national debate over the propriety of 'assisted suicide'—whether it is more akin to an act of mercy or to an act of homicide," the court declared.

Geoffrey Fieger—you remember Geoffrey Fieger, don't you? He was Kevorkian's lawyer once upon a time, though he subsequently left to become the 1998 Democratic nominee for governor of Michigan, campaigning by calling Jesus Christ "some goof-ball that got nailed to the cross" and comparing rabbis to Nazis. Well, when a lower court judge first allowed this case to proceed in 1996, Fieger crowed, "You can't yell fire in a crowded theater, you can't knowingly distribute pornography, and you can't call Jack Kevorkian a killer and accuse him of engaging in criminal activity unless it's the truth."

Turns out, it is the truth. And was the truth. And will remain the truth: In his thoughts and in his words, in what he has done and what he has failed to do, Kevorkian is a killer.

YOUTHANASIA

Legislators in Amsterdam have proposed extending their country's practice of euthanasia and assisted suicide to children as young as 12. Dutch bureaucrats with the Justice and Health ministries were quoted in a Reuters story last week justifying the measure as follows: "In the case of 12- to 15-year-olds, the consent of the parents or guardian is required [for the doctor to perform euthanasia], but in the event of refusal . . . a minor's request may nevertheless be met if the doctor is convinced this would prevent serious detriment to the patient."

Euthanasia as "prevent[ing] serious detriment" to the one being put to death? Maybe it sounds better in the original Dutch.

O, ALBION!

Reuters story of the year: "Tish, the world's oldest known captive goldfish, has died at the age of (at least) 43. First won by 7-year-old Peter Hand at a fairground in 1956, Tish the fish grew to 4 1/2 inches and outlived all of Peter's other pets. When Peter grew up, Tish moved in with his parents, Hilda and Gordon Hand, in their retirement home in Yorkshire, England. Last year Tish, having acquired a distinguished silver color, was recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the world's oldest captive goldfish. Mrs. Hand found him dead at the bottom of his fish tank late last week."

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Casual

A George for All Seasons

My highly imprecise gauge for determining whether you're growing old is this: You are if your childhood baseball heroes are being inducted into the Hall of Fame. I'm embarrassed to admit I qualify. George Brett, the Kansas City Royals star I idolized in my pre-teen years, was recently inducted. I'm even more embarrassed to admit that watching television replays of his teary acceptance speech got me a little misty, as it made my childhood days of Brett-worship seem so distant.

AP/Wide World Photos

On the run to Cooperstown

The most important thing you need to know about Brett is not that he was an extraordinary hitter—you should already know that—but that he frequently looked disheveled, as if he had just come from a barroom brawl. One of his cheeks was always bulging with tobacco, and from what I recall of his baseball-card mug shots—a key reference point in one's childhood—he looked just angry enough to be intimidating. Tom Boswell of the *Washington Post* memorably described Brett as someone "who couldn't wait for somebody to come into him spikes high at third base so they could roll in the dirt and see who'd get punched in the mouth more often."

Indeed, unlike many hitters with great batting averages, Brett wasn't content to tap out singles and then lollygag on first base. He hit for power, and if his teammates didn't help him get around the bases, he'd try to steal (my favorite set of Brett statistics is that he's the only player ever to have accumulated more than 3,000 hits, 300 home runs, 600 doubles, 100 triples, and 200 stolen bases). His single greatest hit of all may have come in the 1980 playoffs, when he cracked a Goose Gossage fastball so hard that I recall it still rising when it ricocheted off the upper deck of Yankee stadium.

That home run was the culmination of an extraordinary season. Brett hovered around .400 as late as September 19 (he finished with a not too shabby .390). I recall spending countless mornings that summer hunched over Royals' box scores before bicycling off to swim practice. And while my hometown of Lafayette, California, didn't contain many Brett fans, my good friend Matt Steinhaus was enough of a baseball enthusiast to know a close-to-.400 hitter couldn't be ignored. Thus our routine poolside greeting each morning was a quick recital of Brett's latest statistics, with roars of approval on those (frequent) occasions when he'd succeeded in boosting his average.

Though Brett would never again give serious chase to .400, he did not stray far from the headlines. He capped the 1980 season, for instance, by becoming the only player to sit out a World Series game because of hemorrhoids. Three years later, he provided one of the indelible sports images of all time: When an umpire disallowed his game-winning homerun on the spurious grounds that pine tar extended too far up his bat, he jumped about in such a rage that it looked as if fireworks were exploding in his pants. In 1985, Brett led the Royals to victory in the World Series, though Cardinals fans still bellyache that a horrendous call by umpire Don Denkinger cost them game six.

That '85 series was the last time I paid close attention to Brett or the Royals. His athletic feats ceased to be a part of my daily life, and soon enough, I was watching more CNN than ESPN. I only recently learned he won a batting title in 1990 (Brett partisans like noting he's the only player to have led the league in hitting during three different decades). And I deeply regret having no memory of September 30, 1992—the day he banged out four hits in a game to reach 3,000.

Perhaps that explains why I got so sentimental about Brett's Hall of Fame induction. Granted, I wasn't alone. News accounts indicated that after Brett broke into tears talking about his three older brothers and his late father, there weren't many dry eyes among his thousands of fans who had made the pilgrimage to Cooperstown from Kansas City and beyond. Many of them were, of course, outfitted in Royals jerseys with "BRETT" and his "5" on their backs. Had I been there, I would have been tempted to dress the same way.

The speech will surely become a fixture in Brett lore, though there's another statement of his that I think better reflects what his rough-and-tumble baseball-playing days were all about: "You walk into the clubhouse. There's a rack filled with bubble gum, candy bars, and chewing tobacco. There's free beer in the refrigerator. And food after the game. What else could anyone want?" Amen.

Matthew Rees

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Correspondence

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

Lynne V. Cheney's commentary on the questionable instruction and textbooks used in schools of education was interesting—specifically the current tendency to discount phonics ("Who Teaches the Teachers?" Aug. 9). I teach high school English, and after a decade in the classroom, I completed a Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT) program at a local university. My college instructors were dedicated and usually receptive to my skepticism of current teaching fads (such as discounting phonics). But, as Cheney accurately remarks, the textbook material is often simplistic or just plain wrong.

Regarding English, perhaps the worst methodology being heralded at the moment is the use of writing "portfolios." Students are instructed to compile writing over time, with limited interference from the teacher, and then the compilation is graded "holistically." I've experimented with portfolios in two separate classes of ninth graders, and the results were dismal in both cases. Instead of systematic attention to student progress, with attention to rhetorical effectiveness as well as grammar, I had to make ballpark judgments on helping student writers head in the right direction. Grade inflation is absolutely built into the portfolio system, because no conscientious teacher could hold students to tough standards when the teacher has not first provided step-by-step guidelines.

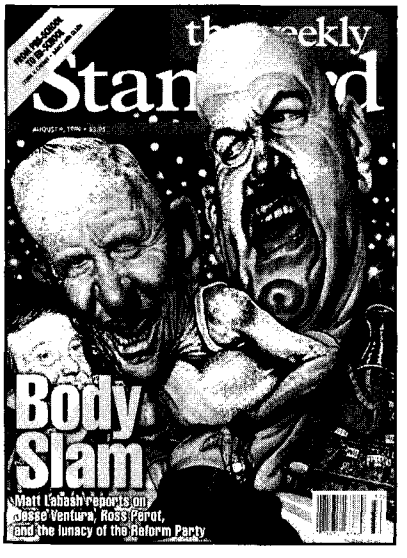
What sounds good in theory becomes another sad way to dumb down instruction—and what's particularly tragic is that so many teachers buy into the feel-good veneer of success in these fads. More student teachers need to challenge the information peddled to them; the most essential element missing from schools of education is debate.

ROBERT STRAUSS
GREENWOOD, SC

Lynne Cheney's mind is in the right place (to say nothing of her heart), and her case is a good one, but it does not dig nearly deep enough.

Cheney's citations give the impression that this madness is relatively recent, confined to our current decade. Quite the contrary, it has been going on at least 30 years, and probably most of the century. As a starting point, I direct the curious reader to the writings of Richard Mitchell. His eloquent assaults on the absurdities of the "educationists" began in the late 1970s, before I even hit elementary school. He tracks current trends in education to the 1910s, at least.

The war is lost. It cannot be won without a radical change of strategy. The institution of public education thrives on its own failures. The more poorly its charges perform, the more money it asks for (and gets) from the public and the government. The more money it gets, the more it can grow itself. Anything that threatens that growth and survival . . . well, *you* go to a National Education Association convention and suggest school choice, vouchers, or (if you're either very brave or very foolish) privatizing the entire system, and listen to them scream bloody murder.



An additional complication lies in our culture. Knowledge, learning, and reasoning are not easy things to acquire or impart. Isn't it so much easier to suggest to a child that he "discuss possible spellings with peers" than it is to actually teach him to spell? Spelling itself is an inconvenience, too, not to mention "authoritarian." Ours has become a culture of convenience. That which is difficult is unpopular, and that which is unpopular seems ever doomed to failure. Some will say that I admit to being raised under this insane system, and yet seem somewhat articulate. Don't blame the schools for what education I have. Most everything of value that I know I have taught myself, the skill of typing being a noteworthy exception.

IAN HAMET
ANN ARBOR, MI

How right Lynne Cheney is! I finally threw in the pencil after 25 years when I had a principal ask me (after perusing my weekly fourth grade lesson plans), "Why are you spending so much time (25 minutes) on spelling and penmanship? Children are going to have spellcheck and computers, they're not going to need either subject in the future." She also decried the fact that I refused to allow my fourth graders to use calculators for the math portion of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests—a practice that was greatly encouraged by the education establishment in order to boost math scores. Happily for me, I had a great class of kids who loved a challenge. Though we were the only class in the school not using calculators, we came out the highest fourth grade in the state, with a 96 percentile. Despite this, however, I was a stumbling block in the soft path that education has become and deemed a tad too old-fashioned in my methods (I was—and proud of it).

GINNY YANYAR
BRISTOL, RI

We read Lynne Cheney's article "Who Teaches the Teachers?" with controlled fury. What possible motive do Regie Routman, Frank Smith, J. Richard Gentry, Kathy Short, Jerome Harste, and Constance Weaver have in promoting such a flawed education policy? Could it be that they desire a permanent, illiterate underclass to prove that the "system" doesn't work and that radical social change is needed? Or to the same end, do they wish to exacerbate social tensions as their contribution to undermining society as it is now constituted? Maybe the answer is that they simply desire a classless society—everyone equally ignorant.

DENNIS & CAROL TRAVIS
GLEN HEAD, NY

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Get Influential

Senator Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., questioning J. Michael Heyman, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, at a budget hearing:

"I am confident that you are familiar with an article from the June 7 edition of THE WEEKLY STANDARD entitled 'The National Museum of Multiculturalism.' [After reading it] I spent the better part of a morning walking around the museum myself. . . . I want you to know that the article did generate a good deal of discussion among a number of Senators."

—Senate Rules Committee Hearing, July 28, 1999

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., on the passage of Title IX:

"Let me quote a recent article in the latest edition of THE WEEKLY STANDARD . . ." *Congressional Record, Monday, July 26, 1999*

Rep. Steny H. Hoyer, D-Md., on events in the Balkans:

"We see that the credibility of the United States has been enhanced throughout the world. As William Kristol and Robert Kagan wrote recently in THE WEEKLY STANDARD . . ." *Congressional Record, Tuesday, June 22, 1999*

Rep. Frank R. Wolf, R-Va.,

"I agree with the words of Bob Kagan in THE WEEKLY STANDARD of March 1, 1999 . . ." *Congressional Record, Tuesday, June 10, 1999*

Senator Slade Gorton, R-Wash., before the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee:

"Chester Finn, in a recent article for THE WEEKLY STANDARD, notes that despite pouring $118 billion into Title I over the past three decades . . ."

Congressional Record, Wednesday, February 3, 1999

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The Price of Duplicity

A couple of weeks ago, Tim Russert of NBC's *Meet the Press* read his audience choice bits of U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright's latest and perhaps final decision in the Paula Jones litigation. Bill Clinton, Wright had written on July 29, has "violated this Court's discovery orders by giving false, misleading, and evasive answers that were designed to obstruct the judicial process." Then Russert asked his guest, White House chief of staff John Podesta, whether the president would "now accept the judge's words as true."

Well, Podesta replied, "he will pay the fine." And "he has accepted responsibility." And he is returning to his "work for the American people." And "I don't really have much more to say."

Russert smiled politely and pressed on: "But does the president accept the judge's decision that he lied under oath?" The chief of staff was undeterred: "The president has said that he would pay the fine that she's imposed, and I don't have anything to add to that." Back and forth the two men went, neither budging. Until Podesta, exasperated, at last gave the nation's whipped and bored-sick majority its voice: "I hope we're not going to spend an awful lot of time on this this year."

He need not worry. America has clearly "moved on." Judge Wright herself says that she "grows weary of this matter." Her July 29 ruling chastises Clinton in language noticeably milder than that she employed on April 12, when she first found him in contempt of court. The penalty she now imposes on the president for his lies—an assessment of some $90,000 in lawyer's fees and expenses—represents a tiny fraction of the $5.5 million he proved willing to spend last year on the private attorneys who *advanced* those lies. They are advancing them still, incidentally, which is why Podesta was so slippery on *Meet the Press*: Robert Bennett's most recent formal submissions to Judge Wright announce that Clinton "does not concur with the findings of the Court."

Not that it seems to matter all that much. The president commits perjury and obstruction of justice and is given what amounts to a parking ticket. He is tried in the court of politics on those same charges—impeached—and is acquitted. He devotes an entire year of his administration to a brazen official defense of his undeniable private crimes, and the Gallup Poll likes him better for it. Is public dishonesty no longer to be discouraged? The tax we impose on it would seem never to have been lower.

When taxes go down, economists teach us, a burst of entrepreneurial activity inevitably follows. It is happening already; innovative mendacity is in full flower. And the pioneers are just who you'd expect them to be: those same folks who slashed the price of duplicity in the first place, Lewinsky-scandal principals and their lawyers.

Remember Julie Hiatt Steele, for example? She's the woman who told Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek* that her then-friend Kathleen Willey had contemporaneously informed her of an unwanted advance by the president in 1993. Next, she told Isikoff that Willey had actually waited some weeks to speak about the incident—and that Clinton's moves had not necessarily been unwelcome. Both versions of which story Isikoff published, citing Steele by name, in August 1997. In February 1998, at the behest of Clinton's lawyers, Steele signed an affidavit swearing that she'd heard nothing at all about any groping episode until the spring of 1997, when Willey asked her to lie about it to *Newsweek*.

Now Steele is suing Isikoff. She admits she lied to him at first. She does not pretend that he misreported the lies. Steele contends, instead, that Isikoff is guilty of "breach of contract" for disclosing the substance of her admittedly bogus but allegedly off-the-record confidences to him. We have only Steele's word that these interviews *were* conducted off the record. And as with most such claims, this one is almost impossible to believe; testimony at Steele's recent perjury and obstruction trial—by her own best friend of 18 years standing—would seem to have destroyed it.

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But forget about that, and consider Steele's legal argument against Isikoff on its own terms. Her lawyers assert that to expect *truth* from a reporter's confidential source is to impose "new, never-before-stated contractual obligations" on this most basic of journalistic relationships. A news organization must "explicitly bargain and contract for only truthful information" from its interview subjects. Failing that, those interviewees are authorized to deceive. And if a news organization then reveals such deception—and embarrasses the deceiver in the process—it is liable for damages. Got that? You have a legally enforceable right to whisper lies, penalty free, to the press. A federal judge, we are sorry to report, is still pondering this preposterous theory after more than a year, without conclusion.

Now let's consider late developments in what might be called the mystery of Clara Bow.

In Bob Woodward's recent book, *Shadow*, there is recounted the work of Sydney Hoffmann, one of the Washington attorneys Monica Lewinsky retained last summer after she fired William Ginsburg. According to Woodward, Hoffmann consulted a series of psychiatrists who persuaded her that it was "highly possible that Lewinsky had a form of Clara Bow syndrome, named after the famous silent film actress who couldn't say no." *Shadow* does not explicitly identify Woodward's source for this tidbit, but the obvious inference of his text and footnotes is that it came from Hoffmann herself—to the detriment, if any further such detriment is possible, of her own client's reputation.

That, at least, was the inference drawn, in passing, by an editorial in this magazine's June 28 issue. To which Hoffmann and her colleague, lead Lewinsky lawyer Plato Cacheris, strongly objected in letters to the editor that we subsequently printed. Hoffmann wrote to insist, "I both respect and like Ms. Lewinsky," and, "I have never acted unethically in carrying out my responsibilities as an attorney." And while Hoffmann did not specifically deny having told Bob Woodward about "Clara Bow syndrome," Cacheris denied it for her. "Ms. Hoffmann . . . did not discuss with the author the 'Clara Bow syndrome,' since no such syndrome exists," he wrote. "We invite you to confer with a reputable psychiatrist who we expect will confirm the non-existence of such a syndrome."

Hmmm. In its entry for "erotomania," Oxford's standard *Psychiatric Dictionary* describes a "delusional belief" held by certain females "that a man, usually older and of higher social status, is deeply in love with the patient."

In its classic, mildest, and most common form, "erotomania proper" occurs among "healthier, sexually active, aggressive women who develop intense but short-lived delusions about a man whom they admire for his wealth, power, or position." In 1922, the French physician who first reported such erotomania as a distinct condition called it "*psychose passionelle*." But the medical literature has henceforth named the syndrome after him: G.G. de Clérambault.

In flat, unaccented American English—but for the barely vocalized "m" between its second and third syllables—"Clérambault's Syndrome" is, phonically, "Clara Bow Syndrome."

Credit William Safire of the *New York Times* for first explaining—in a brief item appended to his Sunday "On Language" column a couple of weeks ago—that Bob Woodward, when told about the erotomanic affliction in question, must simply have written it down wrong. To Safire, this was a fascinating example of the "mishearing, or passed-along garble, of another's spoken communication."

Fascinating, yes. And all the more so for what it suggests about the complaints THE WEEKLY STANDARD received following our original mention of this whole business. For who was it who privately tipped off Safire about how Woodward had come to slip on the Clérambault/Clara Bow banana peel? Plato Cacheris, we are reliably informed, whose public insistence that "no such syndrome exists" now appears in an entirely different light.

Where disorders of the truth-telling organ are concerned, record this, please, as an episode of "Cacheris's Syndrome": the delusion that a man, usually older and of higher social status, is entitled misleadingly to dismiss a news account and its logical corollaries as wholly false, so long as—how clever!—the reporter has mistranscribed a proper name. Reality in Washington already depended on what the meaning of the word "is" is. Now, apparently, it also depends on how you spell it.

Agreed, there is no longer much point in belaboring the Lewinsky matter *per se*. Again, "we have moved on." But that begs the question: To where, and to what effect, and at what cost? And here we would hazard a guess. President Clinton's behavior and its aftermath have established a brand new calculus in public life, one that more and more public men and women are likely to find irresistible. Untruthfulness now carries a historically low risk. It promises dividends—capture and retention of the White House, for example—of the very highest value. Lying remains a sin, of course. But just the same, if dishonesty were sold on the stock exchange, we should not be surprised to see Washington go on a buying binge.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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THE PRESENT DANGER

Last week, while many China experts inside and outside the Clinton administration were confidently predicting that China would not escalate the conflict with Taiwan, we warned that Beijing might well be contemplating an attack. This turned out to be correct. According to the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, Chinese officials have been trying to gauge Washington's reaction to a possible Chinese attack on one of Taiwan's offshore islands.

Now, the conventional wisdom is that China won't launch such an attack for several months. According to the new logic of the China experts, President Jiang Zemin won't want to initiate a conflict before his scheduled meeting with President Clinton in the middle of September. Then China is holding a giant party for over 300 American CEOs in Shanghai later in September. Then on October 1, China will be staging a mammoth celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Communist party's victory. The same China experts who told us China would not escalate the conflict are now telling us that they won't want to do so until these events are out of the way.

IF THE CHINESE ARE GOING TO CARRY OUT SOME FORM OF AGGRESSION AGAINST TAIWAN, IT MAKES A LOT OF SENSE TO DO IT IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

We're not so sure. If the Chinese are going to carry out some form of aggression against Taiwan, it makes a lot of sense to do it in the next few weeks. First of all, the United States is now unprepared to respond quickly. From what we gather, the Clinton administration has gone out of its way to avoid "provoking" the Chinese by stepping up our military presence in the region. Meanwhile, everyone knows the U.S. government goes on vacation in August. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which also took everyone by surprise, occurred in August. If the Chinese act quickly, they can present the United States with a *fait accompli*. Will the United States then respond militarily to evict Chinese forces? Will we respond militarily in some other way? Under the present administration, the odds are we won't.

In fact, the Clinton administration might just choose the opposite course. Why should the Chinese, or anyone else, assume that an attack on one of Taiwan's offshore islands, or even an attack on a couple of Taiwanese airfields, would necessarily derail either President Clinton's meeting with Jiang or the CEO party in Shanghai? If an attack is carried out, China experts and administration officials will argue that what is most needed is intensive diplomacy to defuse the crisis. Our guess is that after an attack, President Clinton would declare it more essential than ever to meet with Jiang.

As for the CEOs, we doubt they would allow a little thing like an attack on Taiwan to get in the way of supping with high-level Chinese bureaucrats. Would the administration cancel talks on China's entry into the WTO? Don't bet on it. In the end, the Chinese might wind up demonstrating to Taiwan, and to the rest of East Asia, that the United States cares more about doing business with Beijing than about defending some small Taiwanese island from attack. That would really give Chinese leaders something to celebrate on October 1.

Maybe we're wrong. But an August attack cannot be dismissed out of hand. And that means the United States must take steps to deter it. It's not too late for the Clinton administration to act with the necessary resolve. Some leaders in Congress—notably Senate majority leader Trent Lott, Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms, senator Robert Torricelli, and House International Relations Committee chairman Benjamin Gilman—have been strong in their support for Taiwan. Friday morning, senator John McCain issued a welcome statement criticizing the administration's "failed policy of pressuring Taiwan" and declaring, correctly, that "strategic ambiguity will not serve United States interests or values in this current crisis." McCain called on the administration to be "very clear with Beijing" that the "United States will do what it must to help defend freedom and stability in Asia." Gary Bauer has also been a strong supporter of defending democratic Taiwan.

Now it's time we heard from the other presidential candidates. If you aren't prepared to explain what we should do to defend Taiwan in the current crisis, why should anyone think you are prepared to be president?

—William Kristol and Robert Kagan, for the Editors

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The Political Theory of Compassionate Conservatism

by John J. Dilulio Jr.

Many liberals, libertarians, and Democratic party operatives agree on one thing: George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" is either a cheap campaign tactic (assuming he doesn't really believe in it) or a flawed public philosophy (assuming he does).

Bush's "Duty of Hope" speech, delivered July 22 in Indianapolis (and which I had a small hand in drafting), satisfied none of compassionate conservatism's critics. Edward Crane, president of the libertarian Cato Institute, for instance, opined that the speech epitomized "Bill Clinton's impact on the American polity" and sounded like it was written by someone "moonlighting for Hillary Rodham Clinton." Mario Cuomo, the liberal former governor of New York, lectured that "conservatism" is inherently at odds with "compassion." Lesser liberal lights scoffed in unison at Bush's belief in charitable good works. Gore campaign chairman Tony Coelho tried to change the subject, attacking the speech for its lack of details on Social Security. Some Democratic operatives claimed Bush was only parroting Gore's proposals on faith-based organizations, while others depicted Bush as a far-right Republican in compassionate drag.

If Bush wins the nomination and the election, his commitment and the merit of his views will be put to the test. But whether Bush becomes president or disappears from the scene, it is time to cut through the fog of ideological and partisan criticism of compassionate conservatism and debate the merits of the underlying moral and political theories, which make this approach to social policy worth taking seriously.

At least as articulated in Bush's speech, compassionate conservatism has the makings of a coherent public philosophy, one that is entirely consonant with the Founding Fathers' understanding of civil society and government, and with most contemporary Americans' understanding as well.

The crux of compassionate conservatism is the will to promote active benevolence in all sectors of civil society and to institute results-driven competition within social-welfare bureaucracies, federal, state, and local. If implemented faithfully, the policies and programs that flow from compassionate conservatism might bring lasting progress against our worst social ills—notably, enormous improvements in how government helps poor children and dysfunctional families. Let's begin by examining the moral foundations of compassionate conservatism.

COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATISM HAS THE MAKINGS OF A COHERENT PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY, ONE THAT IS ENTIRELY CONSONANT WITH THE FOUNDING FATHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT.

Morally, compassionate conservatism is "subsidiarity conservatism," derived from a Judeo-Christian religious doctrine about how government should relate to the family and civil society. The formulation of subsidiarity that I know best is that of the Roman Catholic Church.

"The principle of subsidiarity," the church's catechism explains, "sets limits for state intervention." The family is the "original cell of social life," the "community in which" naturally selfish and self-seeking individuals first "learn to care for and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor." Respect for the "common good" requires that each of us be concerned about the "social well-being" of others and strive to "make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health . . . and so on."

Subsidiarity teaches that charity begins at home. Always, we must "take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life." All calls for assistance, then, must begin as local calls, to be answered where possible by relatives, friends, neighbors, and community-serving ministers. These are the people who can provide help that is (in Marvin Olasky's phrase) "personal, spiritual, and challenging."

But the demands of subsidiarity go further. "Larger communities," the catechism continues, also have "the duty of helping" needy children and

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The Real Builders

He, Himself, telephoned Saint Peter. "Peter," He said, "run a check on William Jefferson Clinton. He's a very old man now. He's thinking of heaven. See if he's telling the whole truth yet. Don't hurt him though."

"Okay, I'm off to Little Rock. Poor Hillary. She's there, too, after her ship of state ran on the rocks in New York State. I'll report back to You. Maybe Bill's building up some 'brownie points.'"

Saint Peter goes to Little Rock, but doesn't say who he is. What do you know? Bill's building a skyscraper in honor of himself and in memory of eight boom years he gave the American people. An old man himself, Donald Trump gave Bill some pointers like on his own Trump Tower.

So Bill's calling his skyscraper, "Clinton's Everlasting Elevation." In Little Rock, they are calling it "Clinton's Folly." At his advanced age, there was nothing or anyone left for him to entice or erect.

"What's this skyscraper all about, Bill?" asked Saint Peter.

"In honor of me and the good times I gave the American people."

"Just a minute, Bill," said Saint Peter. "That's not the whole truth. Ronald Reagan and George Bush were the architects. They were the original builders. They laid the foundation. You came along. You cashed in when this building was better than half built," protested Saint Peter.

"I don't get it," responded the troubled Bill.

"You wouldn't, Bill. You don't know the truth when you see it. What's that pin you're wearing in your button hole?"

"Oh that," replied Bill. "It's a cherry tree cut in two. It's to remind everyone I tell the truth like George Washington."

"Wait a minute, Bill," Saint Peter continued. "Reagan and Bush started this building you are claiming is yours and naming after yourself."

"So?"

"Take down that neon sign, 'Clinton's Everlasting Elevation.' For heaven's sake, tell the whole truth," Saint Peter urged. "Do you know your Hollywood pals have a documentary about you all ready to show? They call it 'Bill's X-Rated Administration.' Do you like that?"

"Not much."

"You are telling a falsehood, Bill. Reagan and Bush deserve much of the credit. The building should honor them. They deserve it more than you."

"Go on."

"Call it the 'Reagan-Bush Building.' Forget 'Clinton's Everlasting Elevation.' Put a restaurant on the roof. Put a plaque on the door. Have it say in big bold black letters, 'Enter here. Enjoy yourself. Celebrate the eight boom years. Thanks to Reagan and Bush. Compliments of Bill Clinton.'"

"I see."

"If you do, you've learned to tell the truth. What's more, do this and in time, the American people will change the plaque to read 'The Reagan, Bush, Clinton Building.' Give up a little to get a lot," said Saint Peter.

"Great, just great," exulted Bill Clinton. "How can I thank you?"

"Thank yourself, Bill. Someone wants to welcome you to heaven if He could only be sure you'd ever tell the truth."

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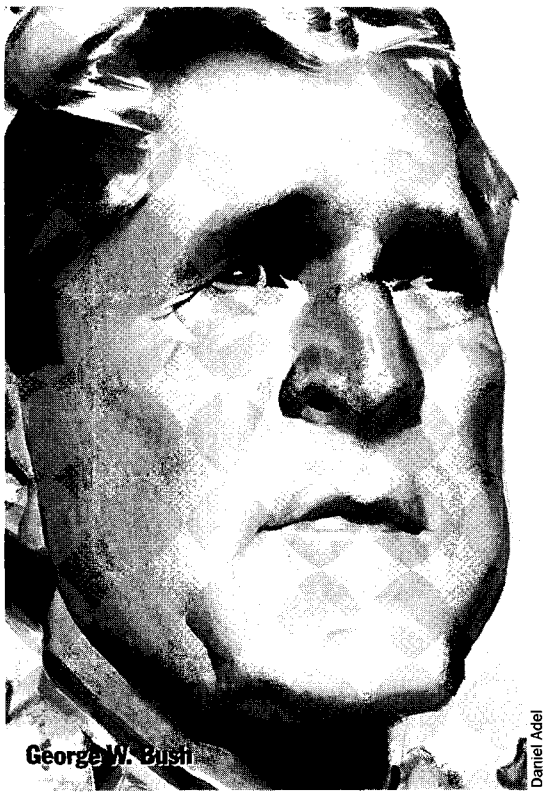
families. Sometimes, families and local institutions fail or fall short in the aid they can offer, as happened on a massive scale during the Great Depression. When a local call reaches a non-working number, we are morally required, as it were, to call long distance.

In many urban neighborhoods today, children grow up "at risk" of poverty, ill health, illiteracy, violence, teen pregnancy, and premature death, with few, if any, responsible adults to love, guide, and protect them. In such cases, subsidiarity rallies larger communities. These range from national secular mentoring programs (like Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America) to national religious outreach programs (such as Prison Fellowship Ministries) to federal and state anti-poverty and social welfare programs (like Social Security in the '30s, Medicare in the '60s, and beefed-up Medicaid in the '90s).


George W. Bush
Daniel Adel

Although the word "subsidiarity" never passed Bush's lips, his "Duty of Hope" speech reads like a blueprint for applied subsidiarity. "In every instance where my administration sees a responsibility to help people," he promised, "we will look first to faith-based organizations, charities and community groups." Look first to them, but not last or only to them, for sometimes "the armies of compassion are outnumbered and outflanked and outgunned." Thus, it "is not enough to call for volunteerism. Without more support and resources—public and private—we are asking them to make bricks without straw."

Bush flatly rejected the "destructive" view "that if government would only get out of our way, all our problems would be solved," a public philosophy with "no higher goal, no nobler purpose, than 'Leave us alone.'" There are, he insisted, "some things the government *should* be doing—like Medicaid for poor children. Government cannot be replaced by charities—but it can welcome them as partners, not resent them as rivals."

Bush's moral case for both ministry and Medicaid will resonate, I suspect, with most Americans. Most voters want Washington to pump hard (but not slam) the brakes on government. Most citizens favor cost-effective public/private partnerships to help those whom the Bible calls "the least of these."

But how can compassionate conservatives foster such partnerships from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue? "Resources," Bush declared, "should be devolved, not just to states, but to charities and neighborhood healers." In talking points released to the press along with his speech, he added that "resources should be made available through contracts, certificates or grants on a competitive basis to *all* organizations—including religious ones." Those words could prove to be the most significant reformulation of what government should do and how it should do it by any leading candidate for president since Woodrow Wilson. Let me briefly say why.

Most of what Washington now does in domestic policy it does "by proxy." Since 1945, virtually all major domestic initiatives—Medicare, Medicaid, welfare, you name it—have been administered through networks of state and local governments and nonprofit organizations. With few exceptions (federal prison wardens come to mind), federal civil servants don't actually perform the services that the programs they administer provide.

Devolution via block grant is just one species of government by proxy. It began not in 1994 with Republicans, but in 1966 with Democrats. Between 1989 and 1994, 6 federal agencies oversaw 15 block grants, while responsibility for nearly 600 federal categorical grant programs resided in over 20 federal agencies. Block grants never either restrained federal social spending or improved its results. When the Republicans took control of Congress in 1995, they thought they had a mandate to trim Medicaid and other popular federal programs; they even thought they could gain from a government shutdown. But apart from its great success in pouring federal welfare cash assistance into a new block grant program

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(Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), the Republicans' federalism agenda achieved next to nothing.

Bush's reform agenda, however, might accomplish devolution with a difference. He would allot federal funds and administer programs not only through existing government-by-proxy networks, but also directly through competing community organizations. For example, the 21st Century Program, which provides federal funding for after-school activities, can currently be administered only by public schools. Bush would open "the *entire*" program to competitive bidding, so that local charities and other community and faith-based organizations could compete to administer it. Likewise, he would block-grant funds for pilot maternity homes to states that made the money available "either as certificates to individuals, or as competitive grants to providers, who could use the funds to purchase or operate a facility."

Opening competition for federal funds to all, including tiny local faith-based organizations, could usher in a new era of results-driven public administration. Scores of federal social welfare programs could be cured or killed, improved or immobilized, refunded or forgotten. Public servants at all levels of government could be rewarded according to whether they and their proxies actually achieved positive results (safer, healthier, better-housed kids, clean and sober former addicts, ex-welfare moms with steady jobs), not whether they pushed relevant papers, obeyed perverse regulations, or supervised bigger staffs.

Despite the pressures of a political campaign, Bush is not overselling his compassionate conservatism. This is evident, for example, in his admission that faith-based programs, though enormously promising, cannot succeed unaided and still need to be studied closely. But neither is Bush aiming too low—witness his plea to help "an estimated 1.3 million children" who have one or both parents in prison or jail. "These are forgotten children," he said, "almost six times more likely to go to prison themselves." Morally, "they should not be punished for the sins of their fathers." Politically, government can help by administering "grants to ministries and mentoring programs targeting these children and their families." What is wrong with that?

As a staunch pro-lifer, I differ with Bush on abortion, and I may differ with him on other issues, too. So far, though, none of Bush's critics has persuaded me that compassionate conservatism is anything other than morally compelling and politically sound. If combined with intelligent, rigorous implementation, it could turn out to be a public philosophy of substance for a new American century.

John J. DiIulio Jr. is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD *and senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.*

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Beijing Vs. Taipei

by Ross Terrill

"EVERYONE NOW UNDERSTANDS there is a problem with Taiwan's status," said President Lee Teng-hui in a recent conversation with American visitors. But in fact, not everyone does seem to understand this. The United States has become locked into a Beijing-flavored One China policy based on a fiction. Once, it may have been a useful fiction. Now it has become a dangerous one.

Taiwan has proved one of the most intractable challenges of the post-Soviet Union world. The issue was born with the Cold War, and the widespread collapse of communism and surge of democracy should give us a clue to its effective management. Our Cold War was not with Russia but with communism. Our problem with China also is communism. In Asia, Cold War still freezes the Taiwan Strait.

Beijing has always embedded its mantra of "reunification" in the rhetoric of popular will and social justice. Said the young Mao Zedong, urging independence for Hunan Province in 1920: "I would give my support [to the unity of China] if there were a thorough and general revolution in China, but this is not possible. . . . Therefore . . . we cannot start with the whole, but must start with the parts."

The unity of China viewed as an ideal, or as an unstoppable historical locomotive, does not outweigh the imperatives of popular will and social justice. Not for Mao in 1920; nor for the Taiwanese in 1999.

Shortly before talking with American visitors at a conference in Taipei in July sponsored by Taiwan's 21st Century Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, President Lee had bamboozled the world with a new locution describing the Taiwan-China relationship: "special state-to-state relations." Such opaqueness in formulations about "state" and "nation" in relation to China is par for the course. The very term "China" is historically a slippery one. Empire, civilization, nation? Certainly for most of its history "China" has not viewed itself as merely one nation among many.

The push by the Chinese Communist party to include Taiwan in the newly established People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949-50 had a moral dimension. Taiwan in the 1940s stood in an ambiguous relation to a China which historically had cared relatively little for it. But this ambiguity was eclipsed by the fact that the losing party in the civil war, the Nationalist party of Chiang Kai-shek, fled to Taiwan and tried to maintain its existence there as the Republic of China (ROC).

That Beijing possessed a momentum that would soon secure Taiwan for the tender mercies of Maoism was strongly suggested by the absence of any U.S. warning not to incorporate the island. President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson both indicated in January 1950 that the United States would maintain a hands-off approach to Korea and Taiwan—words we now know were carefully noted in Moscow and Beijing.

Then in June 1950, Taiwan became a large issue when North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung attacked South Korea. Washington's Korea and Taiwan policies were turned on their heads.

Beijing implicitly accepted the new U.S. firmness on Taiwan. After the United States intervened in Korea, and China was preparing to do the same, Mao sent a telegram to the head of the New China News Agency ordering him to refrain from any public statement that Taiwan would be taken within a given period of time: "Please note that from now on, we will only speak about our intention of attacking Taiwan and Tibet, but say nothing of the timing of the attack."

The events of 1949-50 have relevance for today. The Truman-Acheson East Asia policy of January 1950 failed to deter looming aggression. When the policy was changed in June 1950, the world saw a clear-cut case of successful deterrence in Mao's retreat from a timetable for acquiring Taiwan. When necessity pressed upon it, the Chinese Communist party proved flexible about the unification of Taiwan with the mainland. Only later propaganda has cast unification as an uncompromisable cause.

In the 1950s, a gap opened up between Beijing's mantra of reunification ("We Shall Certainly Liberate Taiwan") and China's actual behavior on this issue. The bark was fearsome, but the bites were trivial. It was the American military link with Taiwan and with Japan that deterred Beijing from acting on its ambition to grab Taiwan.

Beijing maneuvered patiently for two decades, carefully exploiting the gap between theory and practice in Taiwan's relation to the mainland. As a result, when Beijing negotiated recognition with dozens of nations in the 1970s, it succeeded in persuading one and all to accept the unfinished Chinese civil war as the sole context for consideration of the Taiwan issue. The mirage of massive trade with the PRC held many nations in thrall. Fear was widespread that without Beijing's cooperation the wars in Indochina might engulf Southeast Asia and the world powers. So the mantra worked, confirming Nikita Khrushchev's grumpy respect for Beijing's use of political rhetoric, as "a sort of voodoo belief in the power of curses and incantations."

Crucially, Chiang Kai-shek's outlook and the polit-

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ical situation within Taiwan during the 1970s lent credence to the Chinese Communists' view, making it plausible for countries that extended recognition to Beijing to settle for the One China concept. But developments within Taiwan starting in the 1980s—in particular the coming of democracy in the '90s—have created a fresh context.

"I must say quite simply," said President Lee in our discussion on July 28, "I'm the president of a country. I must stand up for the national interest of this country." Every little while, Lee cuts a thin slice off the salami of reunification and declares with a grin that the salami is unchanged. For this we should salute him. The fiction of One China has lost its credibility, and Lee's mode of coping with its erosion is reasonable.

President Clinton has proved inconstant on Taiwan. He is apparently unable to discern the difference between Washington's "acknowledging" in 1972 that "Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait" saw Taiwan as part of China and Washington's "embracing a One China policy," as he said it had done when he was in China in June 1998. Equally, he failed to distinguish between avoiding support for Taiwan's recognition as a nation and standing in the way of such recognition. Or between leaving Taiwan's relationship with the PRC up to the two sides and himself declaring reunification to be the American agenda, as he did in his remarks at Beijing University. He needlessly breathed new life into Beijing's concept of One China.

Some in Washington display a stunning failure to grasp the meaning of the transformation of the Taiwan issue in the 1990s. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in 1998, Charles W. Freeman Jr. asserted:

> Until President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in June 1995, Taiwan and the Chinese mainland had been moving toward mutual accommodation through informal economic and cultural exchanges and dialogue. On both sides of the strait there was a consensus on the ideal of "One China" and the imperative of realizing it through some form of reunification. This consensus, endorsed by the United States, kept the peace and fostered an atmosphere conducive to negotiation. The consensus has now collapsed. Taiwan seems convinced it can campaign for independence with the military backing of the United States.

But to say that President Lee's visit to Cornell University in 1995 is what transformed the Taiwan issue is to overlook the significance for international relations of the coming of democracy to Taiwan. To speak of a consensus on the "imperative" of achieving One China is a piece of elitism that disregards a large segment of grass-roots sentiment in Taiwan. And it is simply false to say the United States has ever endorsed the "imperative" of reunification. To complain that Lee is campaigning for independence and expecting American military backing for this does no justice to the patience with which Lee has set out the conditions under which reunification is imaginable.

Freeman declared: "[N]o unilateral change in the status quo—precipitated by either side—is acceptable." But is there not a difference between a change in the status quo brought about by a military invasion—

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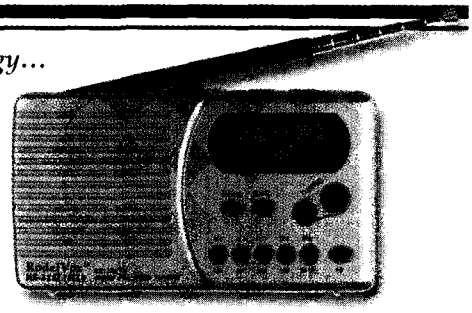

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one of Beijing's ideas—and a change brought about by the will of the people expressed in free elections—which is what led to the new thinking in Taiwan?

Beijing pressures Taiwan with military flourishes, didactic tirades, and vetoes on its international activity. Clinton, except for an excellent show of military resolve in the March 1996 crisis, has allowed America to be browbeaten and nibbled away at by a haughty, unelected Chinese government. That Beijing has done so well in the propaganda battles of the post-Soviet world is a terrible reproach to Washington.

The United States should not heed accommodationists like Freeman but should move in the opposite direction. The starting point is that any reunification agenda must be tied to the will of the people involved. American policy should be agnostic as to whether the uniting of Taiwan and the mainland is good for the people concerned, the security of the region, and the interests of the United States. Further, in practical matters, we should increasingly lean toward an acceptance of Taiwan's separateness as a fact of life. The burden of proof should be on those who are prepared to see Taiwan go out of existence to show why this would be preferable to the current situation.

Lee Teng-hui

Kevin Chadwick

This policy would be compatible with supporting Taiwan's membership in a number of international organizations. It is worth recalling that the Taiwan Relations Act does not speak of "unofficial relations" between the de-recognized ROC and the United States. The legislation never uses the term. It is a victory for Beijing, with its relentless pressure for reunification, that Clinton officials are so quick to speak of the merely "unofficial relations" between Washington and Taipei. There is no inherent reason why every dealing U.S. officials have with Taiwan officials should be defensively labeled "unofficial" just because the two countries lack full diplomatic relations—as the PRC and the United States did in 1972 when President Nixon made his historic trip to Beijing.

Does this argument overlook the fundamental importance of U.S.-China relations? Not at all. But as long as Beijing remains a Leninist dictatorship, no "strategic partnership" between it and ourselves is possible. One day there will be political change in China. Washington-Beijing relations will benefit, and it will be seen that Lee Teng-hui's democratic Taiwan was a crucial forerunner of a democratic mainland.

Such an adjusted Taiwan policy is not dangerous but workable because a course of escalating tension and conflict with the United States is not an option for a Chinese government that wishes to continue the marketization of its economy and its policy of smiles toward Southeast Asia. Whereas in the context of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the inclusion of Taiwan in the PRC could have validly been called reunification, in the 21st century it would probably be an act of expansionism on the part of the Chinese Communist state.

In the future, a Taiwan that was separate from China but non-hostile to it, as Finland was to the Soviet Union, or Panama is to the United States, could be in Beijing's interests. Such a Taiwan, perhaps entering into a security agreement with the mainland, might be less of a threat to China, and to the balance of power in East Asia, than an aggrieved, armed-to-the-teeth, foreign-backed Taiwan would be. But, over the years, we have seen that it suits the Chinese Communist state to keep the international situation tense.

Which brings us back to the larger picture of U.S.-China relations. Back in 1972, the Nixon-Mao compromise had three components: a strategic dialogue, with the Soviet threat as focus; a modus vivendi on Taiwan, in which China got the form (One China) and the United States got the substance (continuing ties with a separate Taiwan); and a tacit agreement to pay minimal attention to ideological differences.

Three events undermined the Nixon-Mao compromise. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed the raison d'être of the strategic dialogue. The coming of democracy in Taiwan gave the island a new sense of itself as a sovereign country. And the Tiananmen Square tragedy of 1989 canceled the possibility of ignoring ideological differences between China and the United States. Henceforth our China policy required a new footing. But the Clinton period has produced no clear picture of what American interests

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are in our post-Soviet relationship with China.

The China problem is not the rise of China, but the rise of a China that, so far, remains Leninist. Nixon told Mao, "What is important is not a nation's internal political philosophy." But Nixon's maxim has been swept away by Tiananmen, the end of the Cold War, and the birth and growth of democracy in Taiwan.

We benefit from full engagement with China. But we also must build an equilibrium in the Asia-Pacific region that keeps in check, a China in the grip of dictatorial arrogance. Only a strong America with geopolitical vision can ensure that the Chinese Communists do not whittle away our leadership in Asia by a thousand cuts—and grab Taiwan.

"Peace in the Taiwan area," said Lee Teng-hui truly in our talk, "is a common asset of the international community." But the military balance in the Taiwan Strait may be tipping in Beijing's favor. We are not called upon to solve the Taiwan problem, only to quietly back Taiwan as freedom intersects with Chinese civilization. Beijing is telling the world it is angry and plans to "do something" about the offense of Taiwan's separate existence. Washington's responsibility, given the Taiwan Relations Act, the high stakes of stability in East Asia, and our fundamental commitment to democracy, is to eschew ambiguity and make it crystal clear that a military move against Taiwan would be resisted by the United States. President Clinton should pick up the phone and say to President Jiang Zemin, in the words of President Reagan, that any attack by Beijing on Taiwan would damage U.S.-China relations "beyond repair."

In a world without the Soviet Union, we do not lack the power to hold China in balance—and keep the peace in the Taiwan Strait. Do we have the will?

Ross Terrill, research associate at Harvard's Fairbank Center, is the author of **China in Our Time** *and of the biographies* **Mao** *and* **Madame Mao**, *new editions of which are due out in September from Stanford University Press.*

To Start a War . . .

by Richard D. Fisher Jr.

A DEADLY SERIOUS CONTEST is being played out above the Taiwan Strait between the air forces of China and Taiwan, a contest that underscores both the immediate and the long-term risks of war over the future status of the Republic of China (ROC). The building confrontation is proving similar to the clashes of 1958, which featured air battles and attacks on offshore islands occupied by the ROC.

You wouldn't know it from any State Department briefing, but since at least July 13—four days after ROC president Lee Teng-hui referred to Taiwan indirectly as a "state," infuriating Beijing—China's People's Liberation Army Air Force has been mounting aggressive sorties over the Taiwan Strait. According to Taiwanese sources, every day an average of 22 to 25 Chinese fighters venture up to the midpoint of the strait, and the Taiwanese, though not matching Beijing in the number of sorties, mount continuous defensive patrols.

In addition, China's air force has moved a unit of S-300PMU long-range surface-to-air missiles to a base on the strait. The S-300PMU is a modern Russian-made anti-aircraft missile whose deadly range extends about two-thirds of the way across the strait. For Taiwan this mightily complicates the interception of Chinese aircraft.

This level of activity has been unseen in decades. After the crisis of 1958, sporadic air battles continued into the early 1960s, but since then, China's air force has hardly ever ventured beyond the coastline of the strait. Even in 1996, when Beijing fired missiles off Taiwan, its air force did not fly up to the middle of the Taiwan Strait, daring the ROC Air Force to give battle.

One incident reported on August 4 had Chinese Sukhoi Su-27 fighters locking their radar on two ROC Air Force Mirage 2000 fighters. This is usually a prelude to the launching of R-27 medium-range air-to-air missiles. With the strait barely 100 miles wide at its widest point, there is not a lot of space or time in which to make decisions about firing missiles. According to U.S. government sources, another similar incident may have happened on the weekend of August 7.

Should miscalculation lead to combat, the ROC Air Force might have the edge in most, but not all, encounters. The majority of the People's Liberation Army Air Force sorties are being flown in the J-7 fighter, an upgraded version of the single-engine Russian MiG-21C, which first flew in the late 1950s. It is usually armed with short-range infrared guided air-to-air missiles. The Chinese are also using a number of larger twin-engine J-8II interceptors, which are less maneuverable than the J-7 but have a longer range and a radar to guide medium-range missiles.

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On top of this, the Chinese are using their new Russian Su-27, which at low fuel loading can outmaneuver the top-of-the-line U.S. F-15, and the F-16 that Taiwan is now acquiring. Furthermore, the Su-27 carries the R-73 helmet-sighted missile, which makes it the superior fighter for short-range fights over the Taiwan Strait. China has just started co-production of 200 more Su-27s.

For now, Taiwan has one major advantage: its four E-2T airborne warning and control (AWACS) aircraft. The E-2T's almost 300-mile-range radar gives Taiwan a superior picture of any evolving air and sea conflict when it is flying. But the AWACS are often unavailable, and they would be wiped out quickly in any major confrontation.

There is another ominous element to China's looming air superiority. Any serious air battle would be decided by early and massive strikes against Taiwan's air bases by China's growing number of short-range ballistic missiles. Sources in Taiwan note that China is now building two brigades of 360-mile-range DF-15 missiles and one brigade of 180-mile-range M-11 missiles. China may now have 200 of these missiles in areas near Taiwan.

THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION IS CLEARLY UNPREPARED TO CONSIDER THAT TAIWAN MAY NEED MUCH MORE TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST CHINA.

In another ominous move that recalls the 1958 crisis, it was reported on July 31 that China had seized a freighter carrying supplies to the ROC-occupied island of Matsu. Just a few miles from the Chinese coast, Matsu and the island of Quemoy were subjected to artillery barrages starting in 1958 and continuing sporadically into the early 1960s. At the time, saving these islands was a rallying cry for Taiwan's political supporters in the United States. More recently, they have been thought of as safe, both because they are fortified and equipped with supplies for a long siege and because the lack of confrontation over the islands for the last three decades has engendered an assumption that China would not threaten them. In the last month, however, in addition to the seizure of the supply ship, Chinese fighters have made a habit of flying large circles around the islands, to convey the message that this time, unlike the late 1950s, China intends to control the air over Quemoy and Matsu.

There is some debate among military sources in Washington and Taipei over whether China will begin a higher level of military pressure against Taiwan before the huge celebration planned for the October 1 anniversary of the Chinese Communist party. Recent reporting in the Hong Kong press suggests that outright attacks may follow the CCP festivities. But there is a window of opportunity: The weather in the Taiwan Strait usually holds until the end of October.

After July 9, the Clinton administration tilted against Taiwan, holding up the sale of additional E-2Ts and aircraft spare parts and delaying a Pentagon air-defense advisory mission. The rush to punish Taiwan for asserting its democratic prerogatives was opposed by the Defense Department, which apparently blocked an even longer list of military-related sanctions on Taipei, and by Benjamin Gilman, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, who announced that he would block congressional approval of all U.S. arms sales until the aircraft and parts were back on track for Taiwan. The announcement of the sale of two E-2s came on July 31.

However, the Clinton administration is clearly unprepared to consider that Taiwan may need much more to defend itself against China. The administration acknowledged the looming aerial confrontation over the Taiwan Strait only when prompted to do so by the *Washington Post* on August 2. Then in a dramatic August 4 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Sen. Jesse Helms's new Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, assistant secretary of state for East Asia Stanley Roth disclosed that in the previous 48 hours, the United States had delivered six diplomatic demarches, three warnings apiece to Taipei and Beijing, in an attempt to defuse their confrontation. It is slightly encouraging, if recent reports are correct, that the administration has had some tough diplomatic exchanges with China. But it remains discouraging that for defending its democracy and its airspace, Taiwan has been treated as if it were as guilty as Beijing.

At the same Senate hearing, James Woolsey, Clinton's first director of central intelligence, castigated as "appeasement" the China policy of his former boss. Woolsey and Reagan administration veterans Caspar Weinberger and Richard V. Allen firmly supported the Helms bill, which would have the United States sell Taiwan a future generation of weapons and allow the Pentagon to advise Taipei on deterring conflict with China. The State Department strongly opposes the bill. And if the crisis were to escalate, it would indeed provide too little, too late.

Richard D. Fisher Jr. is an expert on China's military and the former director of the Asian Studies Center of the Heritage Foundation.

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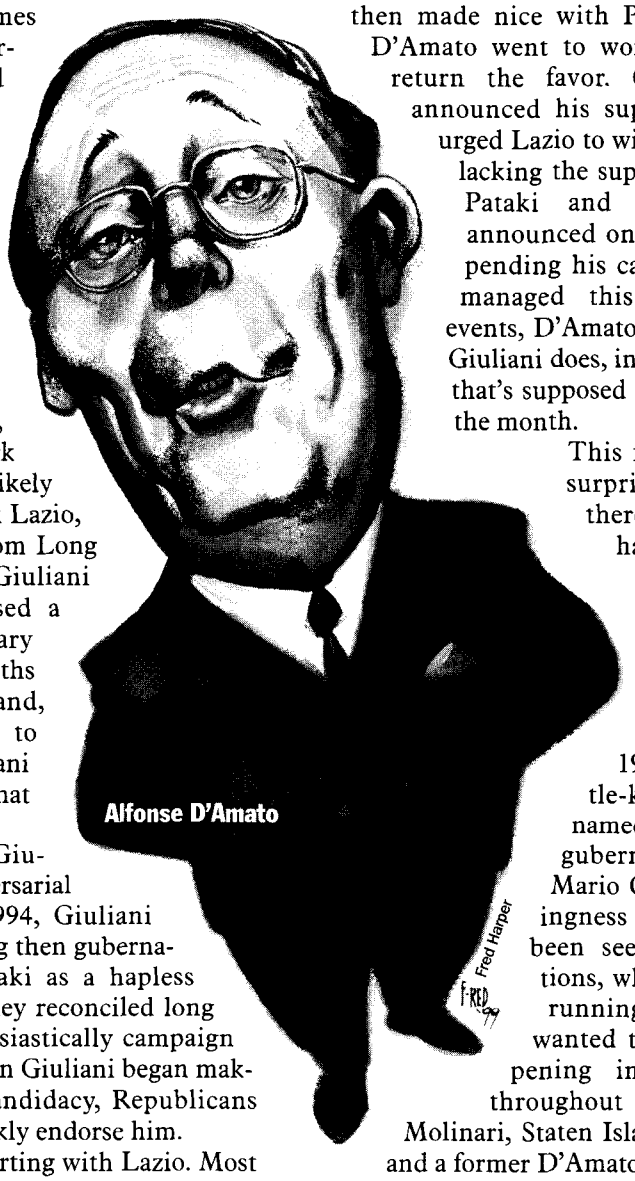
THEY SAY D'AMATO

by Matthew Rees

WHEN THE 18-YEAR SENATE CAREER of Alfonse D'Amato came to a crashing halt last November, it was natural to assume he, like most ex-senators, would fade into the gray Washington world of lobbying and rainmaking. That may happen eventually, but, for now, D'Amato is doing what comes naturally: acting as a power-broker in the byzantine world of New York Republican politics.

These days New York is rife with opportunities for D'Amato. Hillary Clinton is using the state to launch a campaign for the Senate, and many Republicans, in New York and across the country, are desperate to have Rudy Giuliani challenge her, believing the popular New York mayor is the opponent most likely to beat her. Nevertheless, Rick Lazio, a Republican congressman from Long Island, wanted to challenge Giuliani in the primary. Which raised a problem. The GOP primary takes place less than two months before the general election, and, Republicans feared, having to defeat Lazio would rob Giuliani of precious energy and time that he would need to beat Hillary.



Alfonse D'Amato

Enter D'Amato. He and Giuliani have had a famously adversarial relationship for years. In 1994, Giuliani deepened the rift by portraying then gubernatorial candidate George Pataki as a hapless D'Amato lackey. Last year, they reconciled long enough for Giuliani to enthusiastically campaign for D'Amato's reelection. When Giuliani began making noises about a Senate candidacy, Republicans assumed D'Amato would quickly endorse him.

Instead, D'Amato began flirting with Lazio. Most Republicans suspected this was pure mischief, given D'Amato's previous distaste for the fourth-term congressman, who, D'Amato felt, didn't show him enough respect. All the same, national Republican figures were alarmed. They recently dispatched one of D'Amato's old buddies from the Senate, Pete Domenici, to meet with him and suggest he back Giuliani. Several top New York Republicans and emissaries from the Bush campaign made the same suggestion.

Here's what resulted: On August 3, D'Amato initiated a meeting with Giuliani and told him that for the good of the party he needed to make peace with Governor Pataki. (One catalyst for this meeting was a Neal Travis column in that morning's *New York Post*, which quoted the governor touting Lazio.) Giuliani then made nice with Pataki, and, afterwards, D'Amato went to work on the governor to return the favor. On August 6, Pataki announced his support for Giuliani and urged Lazio to withdraw. Lazio, suddenly lacking the support of his two patrons, Pataki and D'Amato, reluctantly announced on August 11 he was suspending his campaign. Having stage-managed this remarkable turn of events, D'Amato now has to ensure that Giuliani does, in fact, decide to run. And that's supposed to happen by the end of the month.

This flurry of activity is not surprising for D'Amato. "If there is something political happening," says GOP Rep. Tom Reynolds, "he's going to be in the middle of it." The best illustration of D'Amato's kingmaking power came in 1994, when he made a little-known state senator named Pataki the Republican gubernatorial challenger to Mario Cuomo. D'Amato's willingness to intervene has even been seen in small-town elections, when friends or foes were running for office. "He always wanted to know what was happening in every little hamlet throughout the state," says Guy Molinari, Staten Island's borough president and a former D'Amato housemate in Washington.

D'Amato's official vocation these days is that of a consultant at Park Strategies, a firm he started with top GOP operative and fund-raiser Wayne Berman, to advise corporations on business development. But he is, of course, doing much more. Shortly after los-

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ing his Senate seat, D'Amato was hired to mediate a federal lawsuit brought by Holocaust survivors against German and Austrian banks. Later, he started writing a sophomoric advice column for *George* magazine and making regular appearances on the Fox News Channel, where he is on contract as a political analyst. He's also hosting fund-raisers for friends like Rep. Peter King, Sen. John Ashcroft, and Gov. George W. Bush (D'Amato is organizing an October 5 event in Manhattan for Bush's presidential campaign, which may bring in $2 million).

These activities not only earn D'Amato far more than the $136,000 he was paid as a senator. They keep him right where he wants to be: in the thick of New York's combustible politics. A sympathetic GOP operative notes the irony: "The guy is a defeated senator, and yet he's still essential to Pataki's political future, Giuliani's political future, and is keeping the state alive for Bush."

There are many reasons why D'Amato remains hugely influential, but two stand out. First, everyone in the state knows Pataki remains indebted to him for his 1994 victory. "He handpicked George to run for governor," says Molinari, "and I don't think George will forget that." What's more, Pataki has little passion for the nitty-gritty of local Republican politics, leaving a vacuum D'Amato is happy to fill.

The second source of D'Amato's power is . . . D'Amato. Having spent 18 years constructing, and lording it over, New York's Republican party, he still commands loyalty from many of his subjects. (Joel Siegel of the New York *Daily News* has described D'Amato as the state GOP's "rabbi emeritus.") He is, for example, in regular contact with Joe Bruno, the majority leader of the state senate, and William Powers, the chairman of the state GOP. D'Amato has close allies in the congressional delegation as well. As for the 62 county Republican chairmen, Guy Molinari estimates that up to one-third of them are D'Amato acolytes. Most important of all, D'Amato is peerless when it comes to collecting campaign cash.

Now that D'Amato has brought a temporary peace to the conflict-ridden New York Republicans, it's natural to wonder whether he will get back in the ring. GOP operatives say it's unlikely, though just days after his departure from the Senate, D'Amato admitted to the *New York Times* that running again was not something he was "actively pursuing or planning, but it's an option. . . . In politics, change is on an hourly basis." One Republican friend of D'Amato hinted to me that a senior job in the next Bush administration is more likely. What kind of job, I asked? "What else? U.S. ambassador to Italy."

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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THE CASE FOR CENSORSHIP

by David Lowenthal

On July 21, a distinguished group of citizens released "An Appeal to Hollywood." Among the 56 signers were William Bennett, Jimmy Carter, Mario Cuomo, Richard John Neuhaus, Colin Powell, Norman Schwarzkopf, Elie Wiesel, and James Q. Wilson. Concerned about "an increasingly toxic popular culture" and spurred by the high-school shootings in Littleton, Colorado, these eminent Americans called on the producers and sponsors of mass entertainment to "take modest steps of self-restraint" to make television, movies, and music less violent and lewd. What they explicitly declined to recommend was government censorship.

AS A NATION, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POLLUTION, ABOUT PURE AIR AND WATER. IS THERE NO SUCH THING AS MORAL POLLUTION?

The previous fall, the first of the signatories, Steve Allen, had formed an organization called Parents Television Council and taken out full-page ads across the country proclaiming, "TV Is Leading Children Down a Moral Sewer: How You and I Can Stop It." The council's object was to close up the sewer by putting heavy pressure on the sponsors of television shows. The July 21 appeal constitutes a significant further step in the same direction. It is impressive, and encouraging, to see so many who have served their country well, in so many walks of life, doff political partisanship and give united public voice to their dismay and their hope.

I joined Allen's council as soon as I saw his daring ad, but I did so without any confidence that his plan to influence sponsors would succeed. Nor am I sanguine about the "Appeal to Hollywood." There have been many such appeals before. Steadily, things have gotten worse. Hollywood, constituting one of the country's most powerful establishment industries, seems equally enamored of its profits and its artistic pretensions. There is no sign of its intending to respond to the fears of parents for their children and of citizens for the republic. At most, the industry, wrapping itself in the First Amendment, reshuffles its movie-rating labels and continues its descent. Far more effective than the appeal's polite request for "modest steps of self-restraint" by the industry would be strong, meaningful threats, followed by state and national legislation. In this more vigorous course, censorship has an important place.

The case for regulating the mass media today rests on several premises: that the mass media are the prime educational force in the country; that their effect is, by and large, pernicious—running counter to the education of the young in schools, churches, and synagogues and to the qualities required of mature citizens in a

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civilized republic; and that government, and government alone, has a chance of blocking this descent into decadence. The argument to be overcome is that censorship is dangerous, ineffective, unconstitutional, and inconsistent with liberal democracy.

1. Should We Worry?

The mass media include television, the movies, and recordings, but the term can be extended to cover popular books and magazines and, now, the Internet as well. The present discussion concentrates on the first three media. There are a few people who regard television and the movies as mere entertainment. Their view is that what we see and hear with such frequency is like water off a duck's back: We are amused, moved, or entranced without being affected. Censorship is not for them. Those, however, who consider the influence of the mass media actual and malignant will seek some recourse. Censorship or, more broadly, regulation, is the needed recourse—one we have been prevented from considering by a combination of Supreme Court enthusiasts and the mass media themselves.

As a nation we are concerned about pollution, about pure air and water, about every aspect of the physical environment, about the prevention and cure of disease in all its forms. Is there no such thing as moral pollution? Has our increasing awareness of the goods and evils of the body been bought at the cost of an increasing dullness regarding the goods and evils of the soul? Are we incapable of recognizing the debilitation that weakens or destroys those qualities that make us distinctively human?

That there is cause for concern about the media is recognized by thoughtful conservatives and liberals alike. Conservatives are especially sensitive to the sexual immorality the media purvey, liberals to the encouragement of violence. Both are right, as far as they go, but the full picture is even more alarming. Never before in the history of mankind have the moral restraints and aspirations necessary to the fullness of our nature, and to civilization itself, been subjected to so ubiquitous and persistent an assault. If our scientific learning and partisan ideologies keep us from seeing this—from seeing that we are on the road to decadence and decline—of what use are they?

2. A Little History

Assuming that enough of the country can still recognize the base and the vicious for what they are, is there anything that can be done to rein in the corruption wrought by the mass media? What can we do to reverse the caninization of the human species occurring before our eyes and retreat from the barbarism it is spawning?

Let us recall some history. When Sir William Blackstone, from whom our Founding Fathers learned most of their law, pioneered the notion of the freedom of the press, his purpose was to free the press from the heavy hand of the censor. At the time, the press simply meant the printing press. Blackstone justified its emancipation from the censors, who were empowered to block the publication of offending material, not by insisting that such offenses go unpunished, but by affirming that they could be adequately punished *after* publication.

Blackstone never questioned what he regarded as a self-evident principle: that no one has a right to use words (or pictures) to inflict serious harm on others or on society. Blackstone called abuses of the press "libels," and among the types he listed were "immoral libels," the forerunner of obscenity. These punishable offenses were considered "license," not an exercise of liberty, and were never protected by the freedom of the press.

Starting near the end of World War I, Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis steered the law away from Blackstone's understanding of press freedom and in the direction of John Stuart Mill's philosophy of extreme liberty. In cases involving left-wing attacks on the draft and on our whole system of government, these justices substituted their own "clear and present danger" test for the prevailing Blackstonian position that the press could not be lawfully used to encourage violence and lawlessness. The test meant that government had to wait until lawbreaking was imminent before it could act against the use of the press to promote it. By the middle of the century, this new principle had gained acceptance on the Court for revolutionary speech and press and was beginning to extend the limits of sexual expression as well. It seemed to offer a more exact way of deciding when government could act against the misuse of the press. What it lacked was prudence.

Dangers can be real and still not offer "clear and present" threats to individuals. Is fanning the flames of selfish and irresponsible lust, as obscenity does, not dangerous to our society? How can we expect the sexes to treat each other with decency and respect, the very young to forbear from sexual intercourse, and the family to remain stable in mutual devotion if sex

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detached from any sense of responsibility and even from love is touted daily in theaters and on television screens? Is it unreasonable to believe that an important cause of the instability of the American family today, and of our enormous rate of illegitimacy, is the climate of sexual laxity encouraged by movie after movie, show after show?

3. The Obscenity Confusion

From early in our history, obscenity has been a crime in every state in the nation, and this is perfectly consistent with the freedom of speech and of the press guaranteed in our state and federal constitutions. Obscenity has never been protected by the First Amendment. But starting in 1957 (with *Roth* v. *United States*), the Supreme Court's view of obscenity began to change. We need not review here the ins and outs of the Court's interpretations. The result, by 1973 (in *Miller* v. *California*), was to narrow the legal definition of obscenity to pornography, thus discouraging the prosecution of any appeal to lust short of the display of sexual organs and acts. Even the prosecution of pornography has been rendered dispirited: In our progressive age, enforcement of the laws against obscenity is out of fashion.

In recent years the Court has gone so far as to insist that "indecent" material be given its share of viewing hours on television. And, although the Court eventually decided the standard prohibition of obscenity must apply to the Internet, cyberspace has become an unequaled global showcase for pornography. A single illustration of how the Court's 1973 interpretation of obscenity works in practice tells it all. In the lower courts, the manifestly obscene lyrics of the rap group 2 Live Crew, with their explicit incitement to violence against women, were accorded First Amendment protection, in deference to their "serious value," attested to by so-called experts.

You don't have to be a member of the Christian Right to realize that something is wrong here. In a word, the Supreme Court, the law schools, and like-minded opinion leaders have replaced the thought of the Founders and Framers with a radical understanding of individual liberty, incoherently mixed with the morally corrosive relativism of the mid-twentieth century. Pressed by secular intellectuals to liberate ourselves from Victorian prudery, we have thrown off all restraints, imagining that we can satisfy all natural appetites while remaining civilized and free.

The mass media—the movies, television, and recordings—need to be regulated, and not only because of appeals to irresponsible lust. They have immersed us in violence as well, habituated us to the most extreme brutality, held it up as a model and surrounded us by images of hateful human types so memorable as to cause a psychological insecurity that is dangerous. The only answer is governmental regulation, if necessary prior to publication—that is, censorship.

4. Meeting Objections

We must now face these questions: (a) Is not prior restraint, or censorship in the strict sense, banned by the very idea of the freedom of the press? Would censorship of the movies, television, and recordings be constitutional? (b) Can censorship be made responsible and consistent with the needs of republican government? Why should what we see and hear be determined by some faceless bureaucrat? Will censorship not be misused and abused by politicians? (c) Is censorship enough to correct the moral corruption that has already shown itself in our midst?

It is true that freedom of the press originally meant the elimination of censorship. But the abuses of "the press" as then understood—books, pamphlets, handbills—could be corrected by punishment subsequent to publication. The offending materials, which in any case circulated slowly, could be withdrawn from circulation. By contrast, the movies, television, and recordings can be "published" at once all over the country, to be seen and heard by millions, young and old alike. That is what makes them mass media. Furthermore, the visual and auditory appeal of drama and music gives them a power totally different from that of printed matter. Equating these media with the press in its exact sense is like calling atomic missiles artillery.

We cannot be sure that the first stout defenders of the press, like Blackstone and John Milton (who also favored post-publication punishment for abuses of the press) would make an exception for movies and television were they alive today. But their principle requires it, for they assume that serious harm to the public by the use of words or pictures is to be prohibited; the manner of accomplishing this is secondary. The harm caused by printed material can be minimized after publication, but the harm caused by movies and television programs shown even once can be widespread and serious.

As to our constitutional tradition, the Supreme

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Court has never closed the door to prior restraint in the case of movies, though it has (in *Freedman* v. *Maryland*, 1965, and *Southeastern Promotions, Ltd.* v. *Conrad*, 1975) imposed on state and local censorship boards procedural burdens so great as to render them inoperative. The Court has forgotten what Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes said as far back as 1931, in a landmark case prohibiting the prior restraint of newspapers (*Near* v. *Minnesota*). He listed four specific abuses of the press in connection with which the First Amendment would allow even prior restraint. Notably, he stated that "the primary requirements of decency may be enforced against obscene publications." How much more would this exception allowing prior restraint apply to the powerful force the movies are today.

The case of television is different again. Broadcast stations or bands of airwaves are a public property allocated with conditions attached. In the Federal Communications Act of 1934, it was stipulated that programming had to be in the "public interest"—a basic condition Congress failed to amplify on then or since. But the principle is there, ready to be spelled out in the future. If the conditions for obtaining and renewing licenses are made plain and then applied consistently, there should be little need for the prior screening of individual programs.

5. Conclusion

Who will do the censoring? In monarchical days of old, the censor was an individual appointed by the king. From his secret decisions there was no appeal. In our own experience, there were boards of censors as well as individual censors in many of our states and cities whose main business was to supervise movies and shows like burlesques. Even today their vestigial remains can be found here and there. But for the most part, they were driven out of existence in the 1970s and '80s not because they were suddenly deemed intrinsically unconstitutional, but because the Supreme Court placed increasing restrictions on them, at the same time that it reduced the scope of state authority in dealing with the harm done by the movies. In 1959, for example, a case came before the Court (*Kingsley International Pictures Corp.* v. *Regents*) involving the refusal of New York State's Board of Regents to allow the showing of the movie *Lady Chatterley's Lover.* The board maintained that the movie gave encouragement to adultery. Brandishing its Mill-derived version of the First Amendment, the Court countered that even such encouragement, like all "ideas," was protected by the freedom of the press.

Formerly the censors, often appointed, were relatively unknown individuals. Today, it should be possible to enlist some of our most distinguished citizens—like those signing the July 21 "Appeal to Hollywood"—to serve as censors, now that we realize, as before we did not, how central, rather than peripheral, this function really is. In our almost fastidious legal system, their decisions—unlike those of the censors of old—would be guided by law, open to inspection, and subject to review by higher courts. Could their power be abused? Of course it could. It could also be eluded by those who will seek every way they can to thrust their innovations on an unwitting public.

But a graver question is whether enough is left of our moral character and understanding as a nation to allow us to frame and apply laws that will curb the most baneful aspects of the mass media. No one knows. The picture of America we see on television is not necessarily an accurate depiction of our urban and rural heartlands. And while our moral corruption has other sources, including excessive wealth, the mass media, which propagate the ideas and images we use to picture ourselves, are the most obvious and most important. A sick man is often helped through his illness by his will to prevail, as well as by the measures taken to make him well. Recourse to a reasonable but rigorous system of censorship will signify that the country understands what has happened and is determined to survive as a civilized and free society.

As for the final complaint—"I don't want anybody telling me what I can and can't see"—the answer is simple: That is exactly our situation now, where a few hidden figures in movie studios and television networks, motivated primarily by profit, decide what will be available for our viewing. With few exceptions, the viewer is offered a variety of bad alternatives, whatever their technical wizardry, for inch by inch, yard by yard, the mass media have lowered the standards of their productions, appealing increasingly to animal appetites that, once released, give little quarter to the nobler elements of freedom and civilization.

The choice is clear: either a rigorous censorship of the mass media, in conformity with responsible republican government, with censors known to all and operating under law, or an accelerating descent into barbarism and the destruction, sooner or later, of free society itself. ♦

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CENSORSHIP?

William J. Bennett

As a co-signer of the recent "Appeal to Hollywood" and as one who often criticizes the entertainment industry for polluting the country's cultural environment, I agree with much in Professor Lowenthal's article. He is right, of course, that our popular culture has become not only offensive but deeply harmful. This is, as he says, largely because movies, popular music, and television have replaced schools and families as the "prime educational force" in America. There is now much consensus on this point from across the political spectrum.

The relevant question is: How can we make things better? How can we convince movie producers, musicians, and television executives to cut the gratuitous violence and sexual depravity that, increasingly, are the hallmark of their craft? Lowenthal writes that we must either impose "rigorous censorship of the mass media" or face "an accelerating descent into barbarism and the destruction, sooner or later, of free society itself." I do not think "rigorous censorship" is the sine qua non of halting a "descent into barbarism."

A few years ago, I gave a speech in Hollywood in which I said: "I do not want government to try to solve this problem. I do not favor censorship. And I remain a virtual absolutist on the First Amendment." On just about every occasion since then—whenever I take aim at some rotten movie, program, or corporation—I have reiterated this belief. Government-sponsored censorship (beyond the minimal amount we now have)—whatever its constitutional standing—is not the way to clean out the cultural air ducts.

Why? For lots of reasons. Who would even want to serve on the Board of Censors? Not, I suspect, most of the people Lowenthal mentions, the signers of the "Appeal to Hollywood." To whom would this board report? How would it wield its power? How would its decisions become effective? Through law? Professor Lowenthal's quick answers to these questions raise more doubts than confidence in my mind.

THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR LOWENTHAL'S ARGUMENT IS DEMOCRACY ITSELF. THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS DO NOT WANT, AND WOULD RESIST, CENSORSHIP.

It is worth noting that certain forms of voluntary regulation already exist and are considered by most Americans, including me, to be sensible and worth strengthening. The Motion Picture Association of America employs a board of anonymous film raters and has recently been criticized for using the threat of an NC-17 rating to censor sexually explicit scenes in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* and for failing to apply that rating to *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut*. Indeed, I believe that far more movies should be threatened and ultimately branded with the NC-17 rating.

But the main problem for Lowenthal's argument is democracy itself, specifically the current state of thinking among the American people: They do not want, to use Lowenthal's words, "rigorous censorship" by "governmental regulation"; in fact, they overwhelmingly reject it. Although three out of four adults agree that television, movies, and popular music are negative influences on children today, and almost as many say

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shielding kids from those negative influences is "nearly impossible," few Americans think government should be far more involved than it now is in determining which footage ends up on the cutting-room floor (which is what Lowenthal is advocating). To begin the widespread censoring of movies, songs, and television programs is a formula for undermining the already sagging credibility of federal authorities—besides which it would fail. The majority of Americans do not want it and would mightily resist it. Calls for censorship will merely strengthen the hand of the filth distributors, who will portray themselves as victims of Nazi-like oppression. Prudence—an important political virtue—argues against Professor Lowenthal's remedy.

The best, most realistic approach aims not at silencing the entertainment executives via further government regulation but at flushing them out. We need not rigorous censorship but pointed debate. And we need to name names. The goal is to turn the people who are polluting our moral environment into social pariahs. It is clear enough that the public is bothered by much of what Hollywood produces, but right now that concern is muted, diffuse, unchanneled. And keep in mind that public opprobrium, without the aid of censorship, *does* work in other areas on other issues. Think of what would happen to a political figure, sportscaster, or businessman who uttered ugly racial or ethnic slurs. There would be a firestorm of criticism—and an important lesson would be taught. Our goal should be to see that the same thing happens with entertainment executives.

My experience suggests that this approach can work, even in Hollywood. In 1995, Time Warner, Inc. severed its ties to Interscope Records, the recording label that senator Joseph Lieberman, C. DeLores Tucker, and I singled out as one of the nation's worst cultural polluters. Public disgust also prompted Barry Diller and Studios USA recently to cut much of the violence and foul language from *The Jerry Springer Show*. There is obviously a lot more that needs to be done; Hollywood is a particularly hard nut to crack. But I believe that even Hollywood will change, if its denizens feel the heat.

There is, I think, a limited role for government in this. Among other things, Congress ought to begin treating the entertainment industry the same way it treats the gun and tobacco industries: Invite the executives to Congress, ask them to testify in public, let them discuss the movies and music they produce. Insist that Edgar Bronfman Jr. come forward to defend the twisted lyrics of Marilyn Manson. Ask the Levins, the Murdochs, the Eisners: Is there *anything* you won't sell? Why was this ugly, stupid, horrible scene put in this movie? How much money are you spending promoting senseless violence and sex? Can't you make your money in less destructive ways? Or is this vulgar, degraded, and coarse material absolutely necessary? If they don't show up, do all that can reasonably be done to make them feel shamed, embarrassed, stigmatized.

In another time, in another land, Professor Lowenthal's proposal might stand a chance. But not in late-20th-century America. Now is the time for identifying and ostracizing, not censoring, the country's cultural polluters. ♦

Terry Eastland

Censor the mass media? In theory, I agree. It defies common sense to say that education is morally trivial; and we are educated, for better or worse, through various media. The case for censorship—or regulation, as I prefer to call it—is simply this: Society has a right to reduce the moral pollution that, left unregulated, would effect its "caninization," to use Lowenthal's term.

Historically, it has been understood that the exercise of this right need not wait until caninization is actually upon us, because then it is too late. Nor has it been thought necessary, before regulations could be drafted, to offer conclusive proof of, or even empirical data suggesting, the harm to society caused by media pollutants. The case for censorship, historically, has been a case for acting upon what people know in their bones to be true. Even the Supreme Court has recognized this. In *Paris Adult Theater*, decided along with *Miller* v. *California* in 1973, the Court said that legislatures could act against obscenity on the basis of certain "assumptions" grounded in "the sum of [human] experience."

The question Lowenthal does not explore is how we get where he wants to go. The law, in regard to

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obscenity in particular, stands in the way. Lowenthal notes, correctly, that obscenity has never been protected by the First Amendment but also that, in the *Miller* case, the Court narrowed the legal definition of obscenity to hard-core pornography. This, and really only this, may be regulated without fear of reversal by the courts. But Lowenthal does not go on to say what the legal definition of obscenity ought to be. This is no mere detail: It is the issue that confounded the Court for years, until it finally agreed on a definition in *Miller*. The Court is not going to change its mind and expand the definition of obscenity unless it is asked to, and it won't be asked to unless legislation produces the necessary legal challenge, and there won't be such legislation unless someone suggests what it should look like.

There is, too, the issue of persuading the public. For at least 150 years, few people thought it a contradiction of free speech to regulate obscenity. Indeed, the consensus against obscenity was so strong that it was challenged only in the 1950s. In that former era, legislatures could restrain obscenity without having to think very long about what they were doing; assumptions grounded in human experience governed. Now, rights talk has altered popular understandings of citizenship, and any move against obscenity—or violence, for that matter—is unlikely to succeed so effortlessly. The old consensus is gone. Can a new one emerge?

I am not confident one will; nor, I take it, is Lowenthal. If there is a benefit from the three decades of increasing violence and lewdness in the media, it is that the effects of this development can be studied. But while the many studies of the impact on society of media obscenity and violence show correlation with anti-social behavior, they do not demonstrate causation. Meanwhile, the leading cultural indicators are not reporting unremittingly bad news. In fact, the murder rate across the country is down. So is violence in schools, Littleton notwithstanding. To those demanding data, as many will who never lived in the older America, the danger from obscenity and violence may seem distant and unreal. That is why it makes sense, for the moment, to employ methods other than regulation—especially methods targeting particular populations. Sponsor boycotts, for example. And journalism that shames Hollywood.

The problem Lowenthal addresses is part of a larger one. Ours is a politics of liberty, but it was understood at the Founding that such a politics could not survive without a certain degree of virtue in the people. For most of our history, we framed our laws in accord with this insight. It is only in recent decades that the disabling of America has occurred, as the right of self-government—once exercised so as to support virtue—has been diminished in favor of personal rights. We are now in uncharted territory, which is precisely our problem. Is it possible for the American experiment to endure without substantially more latitude for legislation in behalf of the moral character of the community? We do not know, to borrow from Lowenthal. And we may find out. ♦

Irving Kristol

I want to welcome David Lowenthal to the Walter Berns-Robert Bork-Irving Kristol Club. Each of us has, in the last three decades, argued in favor of censorship, using some of the same arguments as David Lowenthal. Many of our friends and colleagues assure us that, compared with the anti-censorship crowd, we have by far the better case. But no one out there is listening to our case—and this includes a fairly large number of people who agree that, in principle, it is the better one.

"In principle" must rank among the saddest phrases in the English language. When someone says he agrees with you in principle, that is usually prefatory to his explaining that he disagrees with you in fact. Apparently the case for censorship is intellectually powerful but politically impotent. Why is that?

Well, what the Italian Communist thinker Antonio Gramsci advocated, "the march through the institutions," has already happened in the United States. It is not a Communist march, of course, just a radical, anti-capitalist, anti-conservative march. Any "bold conservative" agenda on the issue of censorship provokes overwhelming and savage institutional hostility. How does one go about appointing a pro-censorship judge to the Supreme Court in the face of such hostility from the American Bar Association, the deans of all the law schools, practically all the federal judges—and, of course, the media? Any such appointee would be mercilessly and unscrupulously "borked," so that even in

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the unlikely event he was nominated he would never be confirmed.

What is true for the law holds for just about every other area of American life. Any educator who writes a letter to THE WEEKLY STANDARD expressing agreement with Lowenthal knows that he will never become secretary of education, dean of any school of education, superintendent of education in any city or town—indeed, if he does not have tenure, he will be lucky to hold on to his current job. One can go further. Any military officer who writes such a letter has, at the very least, set a ceiling on his military career. So censorship does exist, of an informal kind that is far more powerful than any official censorship the United States has ever known. Because it is censorship that takes the form of post facto, ad hominem punitive action against anyone who dares express such a view publicly, it is not thought to be censorship at all. After all, liberals tell us, one must expect to pay a price for expressing unpopular opinions. John Stuart Mill revolves in his grave.

THE CONSERVATIVE ETHOS SURVIVES, DEFEATED BUT NOT DEAD. AS A MINORITY, CONSERVATIVES CAN LEAD DECENT, FRUITFUL LIVES.

For years now, conservatives have been waiting for "the people" to rise up against the institutional elites who have imposed their culture on us. But the people can't be bothered. There are many reasons for this. They are too busy working, worrying, drinking, and watching television. Or they are simply intimidated by the learned academics who advise them to "go with the flow." Or they really don't mind a dash of pornography in their lives. (Topless bars are full of people who vote Republican.) Or they are God-fearing folk who are so busy insulating the lives of their families—and with a fair degree of success—against this decadent culture that they have no time and energy left to fight it.

A key event in the contemporary history of censorship was the Mapplethorpe case in Cincinnati in 1990. A jury of ordinary folk could see with their own eyes that his photographs, however fine as photography, were either obscene or pornographic. But it would have required a larger degree of moral fervor than most people possess to override and repudiate the testimony of the distinguished college professors, artists, and critics who informed them that it really was good for their souls to exhibit these photos in their local museum.

So is the conservative ethos dead in America? No, it survives—often quite comfortably—defeated but not dead. There are innumerable strategies of survival that are available, most of them directed at children. Television-free or television-restricted homes become more popular every year. So do religious schools and colleges. There are millions of families who wouldn't dream of permitting their children to attend a hard-rock concert, and many millions of children who wouldn't dream of asking. As a minority, conservatives are able to lead decent and fruitful lives despite our popular culture.

In the short run, it is certainly scary that moral libertarianism may be able to win this kind of culture war. But our moral intuition tells us that in the longer run it cannot govern satisfactorily. It goes counter to all we know of the nature of man and society. Now, if only we knew just how long this short run would be. ♦

CENSORSHIP?

Jeremy Rabkin

As a teacher of political philosophy, Professor Lowenthal raises questions that are very much worthy of discussion. But like Aristotle's defense of monarchy or Rousseau's plan for radical democracy, Lowenthal's proposal should be raised in an academic seminar. As an actual policy program, it is far more imprudent than the Supreme Court rulings Lowenthal condemns.

The problem isn't just that legislators won't enact this program or that courts won't allow it. They won't, but I concede that arguments from "prudence" should rise above the quick calculations of lawyers and pollsters.

The more serious problem is this: Lowenthal is quite wrong when he says we could "enlist some of our most distinguished citizens . . . to serve as censors." Even if "distinguished citizens" agreed with Lowenthal's argument, they would not agree to take on the job themselves. He mentions a former

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president, a former governor, a former war leader—do such people want to have "Public Censor" on the last line of their résumés? Even crusty old John Adams wanted to be called "Defender of the People's Liberties," not "Censor of Corruptions."

Lacking censors with commanding personal prestige, we would end up with a very different class of monitors. The people prepared to take the job would be ideologues—mostly of the crazy left, perhaps also of the religious right, but certainly ideologues. Lowenthal's position virtually guarantees this.

He wants to go beyond the suppression of pornography to suppress enticing presentations of pernicious ideas. He wants to discard the "clear and present danger" test to allow the suppression of material that has a bad "tendency," even if its immediate effects are obscure. Who but an ideologue can be so sure about remote tendencies?

If the aim is to secure credibility for the board of censors, Lowenthal's own logic suggests that we must reach across ideological divisions. That will encourage a censorship program built not on an actual public consensus but on the familiar logrolling techniques of legislatures. To suppress films that seem to condone adultery or promiscuity, the board will feel obliged to approve the bans targeting sexist or homophobic or ecocidal messages.

Lowenthal ends with the argument that, after all, "they" already decide what "we" get to see—"they" in Hollywood or New York or wherever media titans congregate. In fact this is not true now, if it ever was. We live in an era where ninety cable channels (and a half million Web sites) can cater to the most specialized tastes. In a few years, home viewers will be able to dial up documentaries and movie selections from a staggeringly vast menu of choices.

But the facts hardly matter. Lowenthal's premise is ideological: Once you start appealing to "the people" to save themselves from moral disaster, you naturally come to see the business executives of the entertainment industry as an obstructive "them," blocking the collective efforts of the virtuous community—"we, the people." This is a recipe for a very nasty sort of politics and is sure to be self-defeating in the end.

I believe—and clearly, most of the American Framers believed—that the preaching of atheism can be harmful. But it does not follow that we would strengthen religion by trying to censor arguments for atheism. Surely, we would only succeed in stirring suspicion of government, sympathy for the censored, and a whole lot of distracting and pointless argument about rights instead of about what is right.

I am sympathetic to efforts to limit the most graphic depictions of sex and violence in the mass media—where there is still some public consensus to build on (and where, consequently, we still do better than most countries in Europe). But Lowenthal's preoccupation with mass media seems to me to have the problem almost backwards.

The "mass" of Americans is less corrupt than the most highly educated. I don't know what to do about the grotesque confusions of, for example, half the law faculties and two-thirds of the humanities faculties in this country. But I am sure that encouraging their own yen for censorship is not the answer. ♦

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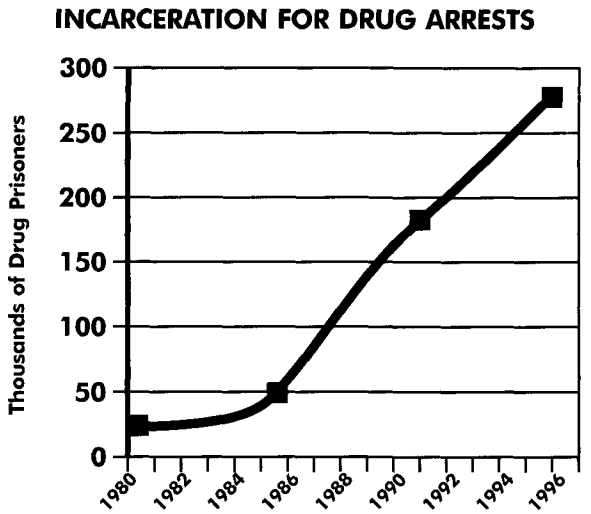
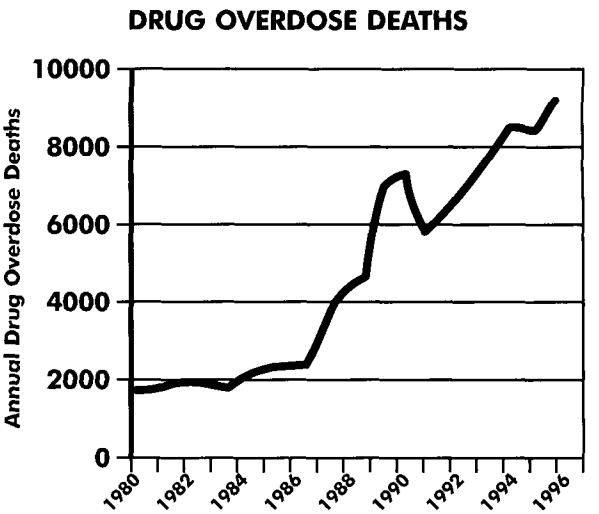
The more we escalate the drug war, the more young people and others die.





Graph Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- **October 14, 1982: President Reagan calls for escalation of war on drugs**
- **Fall, 1984: Drug sentences increase, mandatory sentencing guidelines enacted, Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984.**
- **June 7, 1986: Presidential Directive labels drug trade "a national security concern". Authorizes expanded use of military.**

"These outcomes may be understood as public health consequences of policies that criminalize and marginalize drug users . . ."

- Dr. Ernest Drucker, Public Health Reports Jan./Feb. 1999 -

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See: Drucker, Ernest, "Drug Prohibition and Public Health," *Public Health Reports,* (U.S. Public Health Service) Vol. 114, pgs. 14-29 January/February 1999, http://www.of-course.com/drugrealities/

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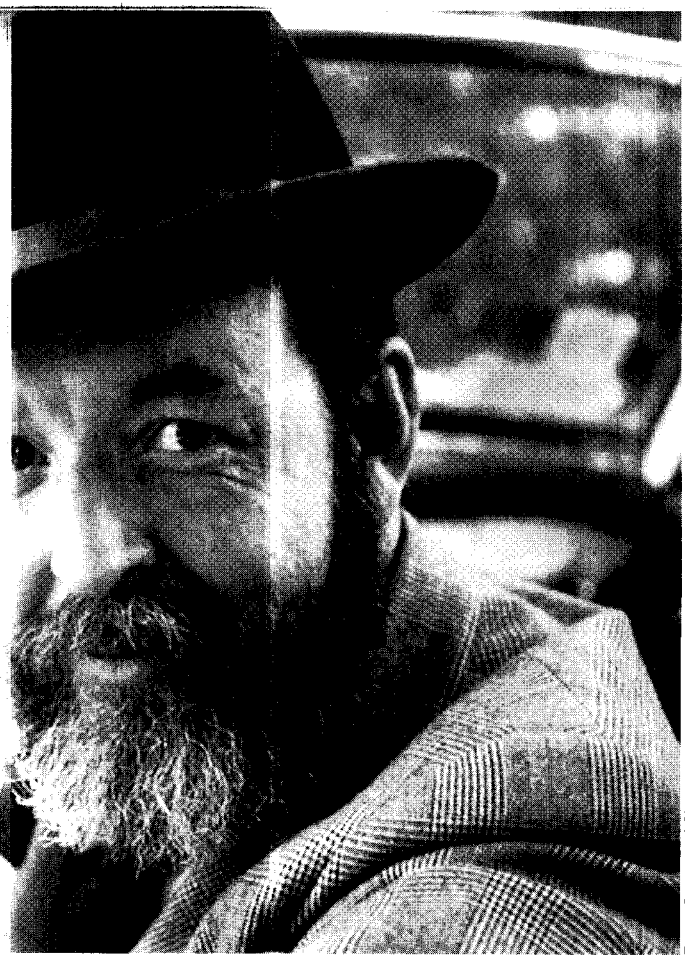
Critical Gifts

The American Mind of Randall Jarrell

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL



Farrar, Straus and Giroux

"A good poet," wrote Randall Jarrell in 1951, "is someone who manages, in a lifetime of standing out in thunderstorms, to be struck by lightning five or six times; a dozen or two dozen times and he is great."

Born in 1914, Jarrell thought of himself as a poet all his life. But if we know him as great today, it is not for his poetry but for the criticism he wrote while standing around waiting for the lightning that never quite struck him. Belonging to the generation of John Berryman, Elizabeth Bishop, and Robert Lowell—those American poets who came of age just as the high modernist experimentation of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound was running down and who spent their poetic lives looking for something to replace it—Jarrell composed the most authoritative and enduring criticism ever written by a poet about his contemporaries. If he wasn't among the best poets of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, he at least got to decide who was.

Jarrell came from the fringes of Nashville high society. His uncle Howell Campbell ran the company that makes that Tennessee treat, the Goo-Goo candy bar, and the handsome young Jarrell posed as the model for Ganymede on the city's recreation of the Parthenon. It was the raw material of a mild, southern, shabby-genteel upbringing—but Jarrell's parents divorced, and he was shuttled between Tennessee and his father's photography studio in southern California. So he grew up instead a loner, his true parents—he liked to claim—the books at the local public library wherever he happened to be living.

RANDALL JARRELL
No Other Book
Selected Essays
HarperCollins, 376 pp., $27.50

MARY VON SCHRADER JARRELL
Remembering Randall
A Memoir of Poet, Critic, and Teacher Randall Jarrell
HarperCollins, 173 pp., $22

As an undergraduate at Vanderbilt, he came under the wing of the reactionary southern "Fugitive" poets John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate. He moved with Ransom to Kenyon College after graduating, living in the poet's attic with Robert Lowell and the novelist Peter Taylor. (Surely, the most talent gathered under one American small-college roof since Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Franklin Pierce bunked together at Bowdoin in the 1820s.)

He eventually found two big faculty appointments, one at the University of Texas, the other at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, filled in for a year as literary editor of the *Nation* magazine, and spent two more as poetry consultant at the Library of Congress. He enlisted in the army in World War II, but worked as a flight trainer stateside and never saw action. A divorce in 1951 was amicable enough and left him unruffled. Aside from the irascible Tate, who came to think him a "gifted, self-adulating twerp," Jarrell seems never to have lost a friend, for all the rapier ferocity of his criticism.

But there wasn't much "excitement" in Jarrell's life—certainly not as his particularly dissolute contemporaries understood it. As his second wife Mary von Schrader Jarrell points out in her slight and gushy new memoir *Remem-*

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bering Randall, the Cuban missile crisis—which interrupted the 1962 National Poetry Festival in Washington—passed unnoticed by such figures as Robert Lowell, who spent it in a mental ward, and John Berryman and Delmore Schwartz, who spent it in jail after a hotel punch-up with Washington policemen. Jarrell was at odds with his contemporaries in his modesty, his sobriety, his sexual reticence, and his very sanity—up until a spiral of depression that would cost him his life in 1964 at age fifty-one.

No Other Book, a generous new selection of essays edited by the poet Brad Leithauser, shows the full range of his critical talents. Jarrell joined many other critics in admiring the new and experimental. But, almost alone among them, he had no interest in consolidating a priestly caste of poetry savants. His conviction, rather, was that most experimental poetry isn't difficult at all, at least not more difficult than "classic" poetry. He sought to win a Lord Tennyson-sized audience for Wallace Stevens-style poetry.

It was a radically democratic project, and probably a doomed one. On the eve of the television age, it implied great faith in both audiences and poets. That faith is both Jarrell's most endearing attribute and the great badge of his naiveté. Jarrell was happy to speak dogmatically: The top American poets of the century, to his mind, were T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, and Wallace Stevens—period. But it was *his* dogma; Jarrell was untethered from any preexisting consensus, opining, for instance, that "There is more sexuality [in Robert Frost] than in several hothouses full of Dylan Thomas." And all of his pronouncements were delivered with a gruff, regular-guy kind of wit, as when he dismissed Richard Wilbur as "the Poet in the Gray Flannel Suit." Without ever seeming to strive for originality, his essays were brimming with it.

Jarrell's early frame of reference was a limited and, we can now see, limiting one. He was, for instance, little interested in pre-Enlightenment thought outside of Shakespeare. But how boned up he was on modernity, and how well he deployed that reading! Almost all his essays covered the highly (and increasingly) specialized discipline of poetry. But no essayist in the modernist camp moved so allusively between disciplines: politics, business, the arts, science, and (especially) psychology—and none wore his erudition so lightly. None could use words like "haeccitas" and "haptic" to less-intimidating effect.

Jarrell was writing on the eve of—in fact, he helped bring about—a great transformation. Over the last three decades, essayists and critics have come to be thought (or at least have come to think themselves) the equals of the

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artists they criticize. But for Jarrell, the critic was always merely "the staircase to the monument, the guide to the gallery, the telescope through which the children see the stars." He insisted on the subordinate position of criticism, dismissing it as "the poetry of prosaic natures." If he had thought of himself as a critic, such sentiments would have been evidence of a touching modesty.

The tragedy of Randall Jarrell is that he thought of himself instead as a poet. And Jarrell's fickle body of poetry defeats the efforts of the most kindly disposed critics to clear even a minor place in the canon for it. Leithauser, in his introduction to *No Other Book*, credits him with "beautiful piercing poems," but he's distressingly unspecific about which ones he's talking about. Jarrell's biographer William Pritchard would also like to claim a place for Jarrell as a poet, but it is to the criticism that he devotes the lion's share of his 1990 biography. The critic Leslie Fiedler spoke of Jarrell's "unfailing" taste as "something nearer to madness than to method," but this was only a way of using his criticism to vouch for Jarrell's creativity in a way that the poems could not.

It is no mystery why lovers of poetry have consistently overvalued Jarrell's. Jarrell is like a best college friend, the one with whom you discovered poetry. As a reading companion, he is irreplaceable, and there must be a lot of people for whom to lose him is to lose much of poetry itself. What's more, he is so sympathetic a person that one wants nothing more than to confer on him retrospectively what he most wanted: the title of a Great Poet. Alas, Jarrell is not a good, nor even a passable, poet.

If he's known as a poet at all today, it is for "Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," an atypical squib from his war-poetry period that runs:

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

No one will ever say of the "Ball Turret Gunner"—as Jarrell once said of a favorite poem—that it is one of the things wise old men will ask to have read to them on their deathbeds. It's a thin reed on which to hang a poetic reputation, but it is so thoroughly the only poem anyone knows by Jarrell that it drove him almost to despair. As Mary Jarrell writes in *Remembering Randall*, "He could tell from the outside, somehow, which letters were 'Ball Turret Gunner' permission requests."

But if it is not representative of Jarrell's poetry, what is? We could start with "A Girl in a Library," one of the early poems of which Jarrell was proudest, and which has been best received by critics:

If someone questioned you, What doest thou here?
You'd knit your brows like an orangoutang
(But not so sadly; not so thoughtfully)
And answer with a pure heart, guilelessly:
I'm studying . . .

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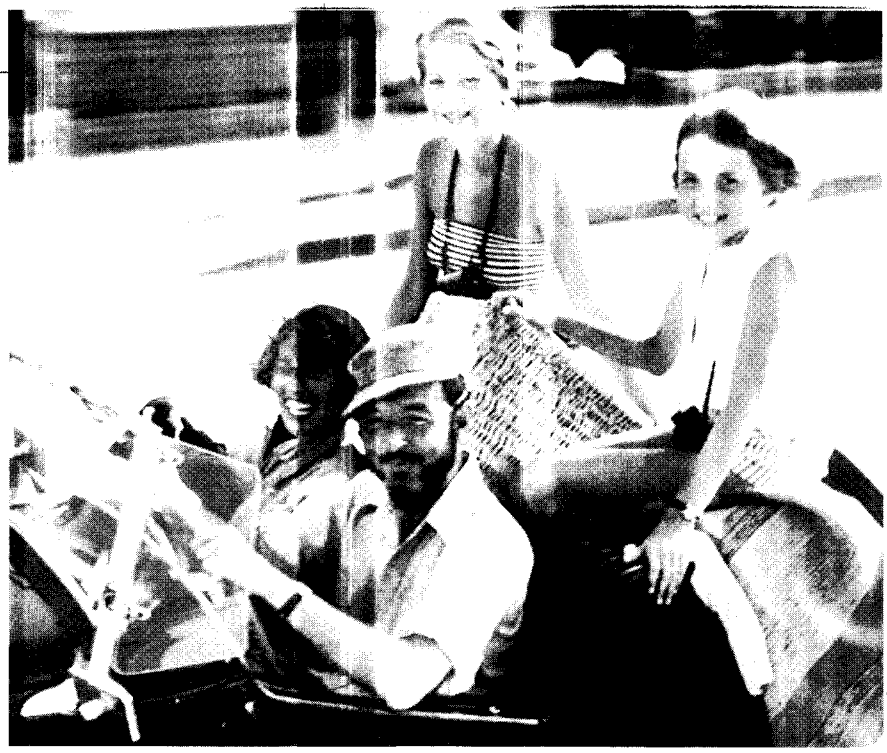
Here, what amazes is the slackness (doesn't "with a pure heart" mean "guilelessly"?), the hackneyed effects ("doest thou"), the cheap shots ("not so thoughtfully" as "an orangoutang"), the elbowing eagerness for alliteration and assonance that produces only tongue-twisters. Where, for instance, is the metrical gift and euphony that stamp his prose criticism with lines like "The clustering stresses learned from accentual verse"—which would be great poetry if great poetry could be written about great poetry? But above all, where did Jarrell derive the shallow, gratuitous meanness of "Girl in a Library," so at odds with the blithe man of letters in the essays?



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Jarrell with his family, circa 1960. Opposite: Jarrell in the Army, 1947.

Jarrell's problem is finally that he had nothing to say. There was nothing in Jarrell's life so momentous as the religious Lowell's conversion to Catholicism, the drunkard Berryman's conversion to alcoholism, or the expatriate Bishop's conversion to tourism.

But that is not to say Jarrell was without what the French call a "master-thought." When, as an undergraduate, Jarrell began to study psychology—even to the neglect of literature—he grew convinced he had found the key to unlock human character. This enthusiasm grew into a lifelong obsession, sealed by Jarrell's discovery that he and Freud shared a birthday. According to Mary Jarrell, he would press a volume of *The Interpretation of Dreams* or *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* into a friend's hands and say, like one newly evangelized, "You'll thank me."

Jarrell thought all poetry arrived on a sort of express-train from the unconscious, with the "unconscious" understood in categorically Freudian terms. "It is not, unfortunately, in the writer's power to control what he writes," he once opined. "Something else originates and controls it, whether you call that something else the unconscious or Minerva and the Muse." Poetry, that is to say, occurs by accident. That's why Jarrell liked the image of the poet as a man standing in a thunderstorm or as "a sort of accident-prone worker to whom poems happen."

In Jarrell's case, psychoanalysis was the critic's meat and the poet's poison. If a poet believes poems come out of nowhere, he is tempted to all sorts of counterproductive writing habits, like symbol-mongering and automatic writing—and Jarrell fell into practically all of them. More, he held that all poetry was essentially Romantic, and thus he could find no consolation in being a great critic. When compared with a Romantic poet and his aura of dashing individualism, the critic was a pariah, a stock joke. The critic was the reviewer who killed John Keats or one of those men whom Yeats described as bald heads ignorant of their sins. Jarrell's views were a recipe for despair.

In 1941, Jarrell attacked Auden's poems for being lazily formulaic, christening Auden's signature tic the "Effect by Incongruity"—citing such phrases as "the baroque frontiers," "the surrealist police," "the tree's clandestine tide." The proposition Jarrell is setting up here is that poetry "represents the unconscious . . . as well as the conscious, our lives as well as our thoughts; and . . . has its true sources in the first and not the second." Auden's poetry is "too merely rational: we should distrust it." In other words, if you set out to write a poem, it doesn't count. Only poems that strike like a thunderbolt from the unconscious count.

In faulting Auden for using such "devices," Jarrell was being uncharacteristically unfair. First, any repeated particularity can be called a "device." Double-entendres are a device in Shakespeare, as enjambment is in Milton. A device is only a style that you don't like. But second, if Jarrell's unconscious is working at all here, it is in an Oedipal struggle to kill off Auden's influence after having spent the first ten years of his own writing life slavishly imitating Auden's "effect by incongruity." Take the lines:

> *The rewarded porters opening their smiles,*
> *Grapes with a card, and the climate changing*
> *From the sun of bathers to the ice of skis*
> *Cannot hide it—journeys are journeys.*

This, as William Pritchard has noted with some amazement, is Jarrell, not Auden. It would be a spectacular parody—but it's not a parody. As a critic, Jarrell excels precisely in showing where unconscious plagiarism and trickery result in verse that is slack and mannered. But as a poet, Jarrell never learned this at all. After reading a collection of poems that includes Auden's "The Capital" (with its lines: *rooms where the lonely are battered / slowly like pebbles into fortuitous shapes*), Jarrell writes: "the best of [Auden's poems] have shapes (just as driftwood or pebbles do) that seem the direct representation of the forces that produced them." He has become a mimic, even a plagiarist, without realizing it. One sees very clearly what Clement Greenberg meant when, the following year in *Partisan Review*, he rued Jarrell's

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"unimmediate, unsigned style, through which other poetry, notably Auden's and Yeats's, seems to have been strained and deprived of savor."

Jarrell is so good at making other poets part of him that in the end there is no place left in him for *him*. His progress as a poet is from Bad Imitations of Auden through Bad Imitations of Frost to Bad Imitations of Rilke. The best evidence that something was going really wrong—and very early—is that Jarrell, normally quite thick-skinned about slights, had a hair-trigger reaction to negative criticism. There's no poet more sensitive than one who's turning out not to be a poet at all.

In 1948, Jarrell spent several weeks in Austria teaching at a seminar in Salzburg on American civilization, long enough to fall in love—deeply, permanently, obsessively—with Europe. "My reaction to Europe was roughly this," he wrote to Robert Lowell, "Had I not been there my whole life? Why, how'd I get *along*?"

His criticism suddenly veered. In the essays he wrote after his mid-thirties, the chit-chat of his friends is replaced by the pronouncements of Rilke, Hoffmannsthal, and—constantly, idolatrously—Goethe. The greatest contribution of Mary Jarrell's memoir is to show us how all-consuming was the obsession that Jarrell brought to Goethe. Absurdly, he even laid claim to the formula so often quoted by Germans: "We are the people of Goethe." And he plunged, with only shaky German, into translating *Faust*.

Immersion in Goethe could have taught Jarrell important lessons. At the very least, it could have led him to rethink his daemonic model of poetic inspiration. Goethe, for all his speculation on unknowable drives, was never one to reject a thought simply because it was too rational.

But while Goethe did not alter Jarrell's assumptions about what makes poets burst into song, he did challenge Jarrell's long-standing optimism about American culture. Jarrell had always been skeptical of the nonsensical central credo of American Poetry Boosterism: that poetry arises out of a landscape or a system of government more than it does out of a language, and that Europe's—specifically England's—metrics and literary mannerisms were therefore automatically suspect for American poets. But now he began to have his doubts about the whole project of American literature, the Emersonian project, the "American Adam" project by which Americans insisted on looking at everything afresh. He was drawn increasingly to culture in a European sense—of reverence, limits, and wisdom that accumulates through generations.

In short, the poetry that he'd built his career vouching for no longer seemed that good to him. Jarrell's biographer William Pritchard has traced this evolution in Jarrell's treatment of William Carlos Williams. In 1946, when the first part of Williams's *Paterson* came out, Jarrell hoped it would be the great American long poem. By 1952, with the poem complete, he was saying: "*Paterson* has been getting rather steadily worse"—when the truth is rather that Jarrell had been getting rather steadily more European. Jarrell's long-professed love for the poetry of Marianne Moore began to feel similarly torqued up. Jarrell still thought of her as a fantastically accomplished metrician. But as the 1950s wore on, he began to rue that she had deployed her mastery to such limited and artificial ends.

RANDALL JARRELL WAS BY MILES THE MOST INTELLIGENT OF HIS GENERATION OF POETS—AND BY MILES THE LEAST TALENTED.

And while he attacked Williams as an "unreasoning" and "intuitive" poet, what did Jarrell think he himself was? Jarrell the critic and Jarrell the poet were by the mid-1950s working wholly at cross-purposes. Jarrell's strong suit was the hard rationality of his mind—and he distrusted it as much in his poetry-writing as he exploited it in his criticism. It was in an essay on Williams that Jarrell—pondering Henry James's remark that America "has no ruins"—remarked that "America is full of ruins, the ruins of hopes."

In a 1951 article, he chided Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot for seeing culture as "the exotic, the past, the Earth-minus-America," for composing poems in which "foreignness, pastness, is itself a final good." But he himself had already come to partake of the same disillusionment with things domestic and contemporary. More and more he gravitated towards Hannah Arendt and her husband, whom Jarrell had met during his stint as the *Nation*'s poetry editor. Arendt would later say of Jarrell, "Whatever I know of English poetry, and perhaps the genius of the language, I owe to him." Jarrell reveled in the respect he received, coming to see American cultural life as paper-thin and paltry compared with the Central European variant—not a preference Arendt was ever known to discourage.

None of this was any good for his poetry, in which he began importing snatches of foreign words with a zeal that would have embarrassed Ezra Pound. "Deutsch Durch Freud," for instance, declares: *In all my Germany there's no Gesellschaft / But one between eine Katze and ein Maus.* And this isn't even the worst of Jarrell's pidgin-German. That honor belongs to "An English Garden in Austria," which runs:

And some Spiessbürger, some aquarelliste,
Some Spielverderber from a Georgian seminary
Echo him—higher, higher: "Es muss sein!"

Much of Jarrell's later poetry seems an effort to channel the work of his favorite German writers. The most revealing evidence of Jarrell's poetic baggage is an account that Jarrell contributed in 1960 to a new edition of Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks's *Understanding Poetry* of how he had written "The Woman at the Washington Zoo." This is one of Jarrell's better late poems; certain critics have called it his finest. It concerns a woman zoo attendant who, it emerges in the course of a short narrative, is more trapped than any of the animals she guards. Jarrell has obviously put this poem together with painstaking attention. He asks us to notice—as no reader would, unaided—

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Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, and Peter Taylor in 1948.

the "sexual metaphor," for example, by which the attendant is symbolized by the "stale leftover flesh" that "is taken at last by the turkey buzzard with his naked red neck and head."

In other words, "Washington Zoo" is assembled with a symbol-kit for critics—and only for Freudian critics, who look at literary criticism as a game of Spot the Hidden Penis. We can be sure that Frost never, that Goethe never wrote a poem this way. In fact, even Jarrell claims not to have written the poem this way. He declares that he (or his unconscious) composed it spontaneously: "As soon as the zoo came into the poem, everything else settled into it and was at home there. . . . It is almost as if, once all the materials of the poem were there, the middle and end of the poem made themselves." But they didn't. Aside from the phallic symbols larded into the mix, it is Rilke who made this poem. Jarrell's opening is a transplantation to an American urban landscape of the first lines of Rilke's "The Panther, " while his ending—*You see what I am: change me, change me!*—is an adaptation of the famous ending of Rilke's "Archaic Torso of Apollo": *There is no place / that does not see you. You must change your life.*

The result is a competent enough poem, but a repudiation of Jarrell's idea of poems that "write themselves." The "unconscious" may be a fruitful source of poetry for a warrior-king singing long hexameters on some ancient Greek isle. But for an undergraduate English professor, tapping the "unconscious" is likely to release nothing but "Highlights from My Library."

If the poetry he wrote reflected a waning patience with American models, so did his criticism—in a way that made Jarrell doubt even his skills as a critic. His typically American distrust of European canons—proclaimed and pursued in the early essays—collapsed as the years passed, and Jarrell soured on the American counter-canon he'd helped build. Once you start reading Goethe, what a sorry excuse for a man of letters William Carlos Williams—or Ezra Pound, or Sylvia Plath—appears. Always excepting Frost, Jarrell began to find American poets vapid, and limited in range. If we compare any of them to Goethe, he wrote, "we are saddened and frightened at how much the poet's scope has narrowed, at how difficult and partial and idiosyncratic the application of his intelligence has become."

"There is one law we can be sure of," Jarrell wrote in the *Yale Review* of 1955, "there are only a few good poets alive. And there follows from it another law, about critics: If a man likes a great many contemporary poets, he is, necessarily, a bad critic." By this standard, Jarrell became a worse critic in the last decade of his life. His address to the 1962 National Poetry Festival, "Fifty Years of American Poetry"—which involved evaluating fifty-seven poets in a one-hour speech, with most of those poets sitting in the audience—has long been called the peak of Jarrell's criticism. That's wrong. It is impressive as a feat of concision, but as criticism it is piffle. He treated all but a handful to glowing praise, in the manner of a counselor on the last day of summer camp. He was losing interest.

In the last years of his life, Jarrell turned increasingly away from poetry criticism and toward cultural criticism. It was a sad episode. Jarrell—as Middle American a man of letters as ever lived, who spoke only one language, who at thirty-four had never left the country, who except for his *Nation* and Library of Congress interludes spent virtually his whole adult life in the rural South and southern California—turned on his native land with ferocity. He was a Washington Redskins season-ticket holder, a subscriber to *Road & Track*, a lover of amusement parks. But if he continued to enjoy such things, it was not as delights but as consolations.

The essay "A Sad Heart at the Supermarket," reproduced in Leithauser's collection, laments that American marketing culture, with its creation of "needs" for inferior products, has progressed so far in sophistication, and pervaded so many corners of American life, that there remains no hope of ever restoring anything resembling taste, and thus little hope for serious art.

There isn't even a language in which to attack such developments, since "words" have been supplanted by "media." Worse, "America's present is the world's future," and his countrymen are embarked on a project of mental imperialism that will level the world and replace it with a lot of standard-issue garbage. Jarrell calls this development, with more wit than understanding, "The Great Chain of Buying." He harangues his reader: "Part of you is being starved to death and the rest of you is being stuffed to death." And later: "Reader, isn't buying or fantasy-buying an important part of your and my emotional life? (If you reply, *No*, I'll think of you with bitter envy as more than merely human; as deeply un-American.)"

Jarrell's own discernment belied his arguments, and so did his personal habits. Jarrell—a poet!—owned a Mercedes and a Jaguar, and his wife remembers:

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> Randall never had a savings account, only a spending account where his royalties and honorariums and salaries were transubstantiated into opera, the house in Montecito, the antiques, and a hand-carved life-size swan we bought with his honorarium from Johns Hopkins.

In fact, Jarrell did think of himself as a representative American. His loss of faith in America was the natural response of one who had lost faith in his own representative American project. His confidence was so shot to ribbons that in "Sad Heart" he claimed to be attacking American culture only as a "poet-or-artist-of-a-sort." This self-hatred masquerading as America-hatred is common enough, but only Jarrell's friend Alfred Kazin was astute enough to recognize it at the time. "A poet more confident of his talent," Kazin wrote, "would not have needed to raise himself at the expense of the supermarket."

What a predicament. Of his generation of poets, Jarrell was by miles the most intelligent—and by miles the least talented. His critical gifts only let him see his poetic failures with sickening clarity. In November 1963, he returned to North Carolina after a long European trip and his life began to unravel. By the following summer he was on anti-depressants. In the fall of 1964, he invited Hannah Arendt to North Carolina to lecture, then took up half her speaking time with a disquisition on what a terrific quarterback Johnny Unitas was. That winter, Jarrell used his credit card for "flying binges," turning up, seemingly at random, in airports across the country. The university deans urged him to take a sabbatical for his health. In April, the *New York Times Book Review* ran an essay on his collection *The Lost World* by critic Joseph Bennett. It cited:

> Jarrell's familiar, clanging vulgarity, corny clichés, cutenesses, and the intolerable self-indulgence of his tear-jerking, bourgeois sentimentality. Folksy, pathetic, affected . . . cultural name-dropping, hand-cranked puns and gags—a farrago of confused nonsense, a worn-out imagination.

It was cruel, but not wrong. Days later, Jarrell cut his wrist open with a knife. He survived, but when the hand didn't heal, he checked into a University of North Carolina clinic for physical therapy. On October 14, 1965, out for an after-dinner walk, he was run over by a car.

Despite appearances, neither Jarrell's widow nor his biographer Pritchard thinks he killed himself. They are probably correct, but it comes to the same thing. Visible both in Jarrell's life and in his writing is that, at some point, he gave up on himself and lost all of those instinctive habits that protect us from doing foolish and self-destructive things.

And so, Jarrell's poetic life ended not that differently than it began. A career that started with Jarrell standing in a storm waiting for inspiration to strike like lightning, ended with his walking down an unlit highway, dressed in black, waiting for death to come like a car going seventy miles an hour. ♦

Now More Than Ever

Tricky Dick on the Silver Screen

By John Podhoretz

One of the great showbiz adages came from the febrile mind of quipster playwright George S. Kaufman, who said, "Satire closes on Saturday night." Kaufman meant that it's almost impossible to please large audiences by making savage fun of the ideas and people they hold sacred. Kaufman wrote *The Cocoanuts* and *Animal Crackers* for the Marx Brothers, and both were hits on stage and on screen. But when Groucho and Company turned their attention to politics with the savage and anarchic *Duck Soup*, the only really great film they ever made, audiences stayed away in droves. Shaken, they turned to the great crowd-pleasing producer Irving Thalberg, who insisted that their next movie feature a treacly pair of ingenues and some gooey love songs.

A Night at the Opera was a smash, and the Marx Brothers never again ventured near satire.

The studio that financed the new political satire called *Dick* had rueful cause to reflect on Kaufman's words when the first weekend's box-office numbers came out. Despite heavy advertising and good reviews, the movie made a disappointing $2.2 million and was immediately declared a flop by the Hollywood press.

Those box-office numbers mean that you will have to hurry if you want to see *Dick* in a theater, because it will be banished from your local multiplex soon. So run, because *Dick* is an original: a full-scale and inventive political burlesque about Watergate that leaves no one unscathed. Not even Woodward and Bernstein.

The investigative reporters are played with hilariously broad strokes by two expert sketch comedians, Will Ferrell of *Saturday Night Live* and Bruce McCulloch of *The Kids in the Hall*. They're not heroes or saviors of America. Far from it. They are whiny, petulant, and competitive little boys with weird early-1970s hair and a relationship so charged with anger and hurt that it becomes clear writer-director Andrew Fleming is depicting them as a closeted gay couple. The movie opens in the present day, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Watergate break-in, with the two reporters getting into a slapping fight on *Larry King Live* when Bernstein almost reveals the identity of Deep Throat.

It turns out that Deep Throat is not one person, but two teenage girls of extremely limited intelligence who bring down the Nixon administration by accident. In the course of the movie, these two sweet-natured ditzes inadvertently cause the interruption of the Watergate burglary, uncover the payoffs to the burglars, bring about détente with the Soviet

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Union, ignite a crisis of conscience in John Dean, and feed Woodward and Bernstein the high-level information they need to force Nixon's resignation.

The Nixon White House we see in *Dick* is not some ominous, terrifying place but a presidency run by the Keystone Kops. Most of the performers who play White House staffers are also sketch comics, expert in turning themselves into human cartoons like Harry Shearer, whose G. Gordon Liddy storms around the White House with incriminating documents from the shredding room stuck to his shoe with chewing gum.

Upon learning that the two girls might be able to connect Liddy with the burglary, Nixon himself decides to charm and control them by naming them official White House dog-walkers.

The girls are everywhere, all over the White House. Kissinger gives them a stern lecture on the responsibility of the Johnson administration for the war in Vietnam. They flummox Dean when they ask him why the president needs a lawyer. And when Nixon's secretary, Rose Mary Woods, goes off to lunch, they find a tape recorder in her desk.

Nixon soon becomes enthusiastic about the girls' visits because every time they come to walk his dog, they bring a batch of homemade cookies which, unbeknownst to any of them, are laced with marijuana. During a tense negotiation with Leonid Brezhnev, Nixon insists the Soviet premier try one of the cookies. In a few minutes, Brezhnev and Henry Kissinger are warbling *Hello, Dolly!* at the top of their lungs together, and thus begins the era of détente.

Nixon is so nice that one of the girls falls in love: scribbling "Mrs. Arlene Nixon" in her notebook at school, and pulling down her pictures of teen idol Bobby Sherman to replace them with covers of *U.S. News & World Report*.

On the tape recorder on the president's secretary's desk, Arlene makes a long recording professing her love—eighteen-and-a-half minutes long, to be precise. They rewind it and hear snippets of Nixon in the Oval Office, featuring a lot of cursing and the sound of the president kicking his dog.

That does it. Arlene falls out of love with Dick. The girls tell Nixon he's a bad man and a potty mouth, and he throws them out. Later, he discovers Arlene's recording. "A fifteen-year-old girl," Nixon mutters. "They'll crucify me." And so he erases her eighteen-and-a-half minute declaration of love.

Dick is bright and giddy. Fleming has as much fun with the horrific clothes and fads of the 1970s as he does with the particulars of Watergate. Michelle Williams and Kirsten Dunst, who play the two girls, are enchanting. They're holy innocents who cannot be corrupted because they're just not smart enough to understand what corruption is.

When the girls realize they have forced Nixon's resignation, one turns to the other and says, with dreamy certainty, "They'll never lie to us again."

See this movie. ♦

THE ILLUSION THAT FAILED

François Furet on the Seductions of Communism

By Kenneth R. Weinstein

Historians nowadays are typically a timid lot, shrinking the grand story of human action to an anxious little academic discipline in which tenure is purchased with endless volumes calculating such minutiae as the quantity of grain consumed by fifteenth-century Guatemalans.

FRANÇOIS FURET
The Passing of an Illusion
The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century
University of Chicago Press, 596 pp., $35

It seems unnecessary to observe that it wasn't always this way. In fact, even within living memory, it wasn't this way. The English publication of *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* reminds us that it was only two years ago that François Furet, the leading historian of the French Revolution, died in France at age seventy. And Furet, like his intellectual precursor Alexis de Tocqueville, was someone who took history seriously—using a frank and impartial appraisal of the past to guide how we should live now.

Of course, even in his own time—when most of his peers were dedicated subspecialists or social historians—Furet was something of a throwback to the grand historiographical tradition of the nineteenth century, with its focus on politics and personal and intellectual forces.

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The gruff Furet, who taught at both the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, stood alone for many years in an effort to moderate pride in the French Revolution, and he became the most improbable of cultural icons. His work, which placed him at the center of French national discourse, became one of the most important forces in reshaping France's modern understanding of itself.

In the 1960s and 1970s, most French schoolchildren were spoon-fed a Marxist hagiography of the Revolution. Before Furet, the events of 1789 were presented as the inevitable clash of economic forces: a rising bourgeoisie casting aside the *ancien régime* that was the by-product of an agricultural society. The totalitarian violence of the Jacobin Terror of 1793, for example, was seen as a patriotic attempt to secure popular rule by unifying the state. The 1927 interpretation of the historian Albert Mathiez, parroted in textbooks for decades, simply projected Soviet propaganda onto the France of 1793, justifying the murderous tactics of Robespierre's Committee on Public Safety as an understandable consequence of civil and foreign war.

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It took great courage for Furet to confront this catechism. In numerous volumes, notably 1964's *The French Revolution* (co-authored with Denis Richet), 1978's *Interpreting the French Revolution*, and 1986's *Marx and the French Revolution*, Furet rejected economic determinism. The 1789 Revolution, he argued, may have begun by calling for representative government in the face of a monarchy increasingly bent on consolidating power. But within four years, any hope for a liberal democracy was dashed with the Terror. Despite faulty historiographical claims to the contrary, the Terror was a response neither to class conflict (there was none between Jacobins and other revolutionaries) nor to external aggression (the most violent stage occurred after the foreign threat had receded). Rather, Furet suggested, the best explanation is to be found in the work of such nineteenth-century thinkers as Tocqueville and Augustin Cochin—who saw the Jacobins not as ordinary tyrants but as a new type of men, so enamored of certain intellectual ideals that they were willing to sacrifice their countrymen in the name of regenerating mankind.

Drawing on this powerful insight, Furet turned in his last work, *The Passing of an Illusion*, to the fundamental historical puzzle of the twentieth century: the lure of communism. When it first appeared in French in 1995, the book was a bestseller—in part because Furet demonstrated that he understood the Communist appeal (he had been a card-carrying member of the French party until 1956) and yet also understood how difficult it is, from the perspective of the 1990s, to grasp why anyone ever believed in the murderous ideology.

But believe they did. At the peak of the Communist illusion, not even its opponents expected it to be "erased" (as Furet puts it). As he did in his works on the French Revolution, Furet rejects class warfare as the explanation. Rather, using a mix of political philosophy and history, Furet suggests that all liberal democracies are prone to a curious mistrust of the results of democracy.

The critics of classical liberalism, Jean Jacques Rousseau first among them, had warned that the individuals created by liberalism are purely economic characters, detached from all community and the common good. And indeed, what liberalism claims as its greatest virtue—the equality of these self-interested and atomized individuals—is continuously undermined as their competition with one another leads to inequalities of property. Thus, during the French Revolution, the Jacobins (who began as bourgeois partisans of the market economy) turned against the new aristocracy of wealth and embraced what Furet describes as the most potent idea in modern democracy: the revolutionary ideal.

François Furet

University of Chicago Press

That ideal was born from a profound arrogance about the omnipotence of the popular will and the powerful illusion that man can create a new social contract embodying the ideal society. But it was also plagued by a profound self-doubt—for if democratic equality will always produce aristocratic inequality, the need for revolution is at best questionable. And the interplay of these two—revolutionary arrogance and revolutionary self-doubt—continued in France throughout the nineteenth century (as Furet notes in his classic, *The French Revolution*).

But the unprecedented destruction of the First World War, which seemed to indict the moral underpinnings of liberal democracy, quickly overcame any self-doubt about the need for revolution, and modern revolutionary arrogance was reborn in 1917 in the most unlikely of venues: Russia, the most backward nation in Europe. By appropriating the Jacobin precedent, the Bolsheviks claimed a historical analogy to the French Revolution. Lenin's terror was excused or even lauded as the reincarnation of Robespierre's, and Lenin's promise of a new future for mankind in Russia seemed the fulfillment of the French Revolution's similar promise.

Claiming to be both the highest scientific development and the highest moral sense, communism, Furet argues,

> appeared to unite science and morals—a miraculous combination of two types of reason drawn from two different universes. Convinced that they are accomplishing the laws of history, militants also fight the egoism of the capitalist world in the name of the universality of man. They swaddle their deeds in a new kind of conscience, exalted as a civic virtue. . . . All Communists believed, or still believe, that they experience in advance the reconciliation of humanity with itself.

The antibourgeois sentiment and revolutionary arrogance that generated the Russian Revolution also fueled the rise of Mussolini and Hitler in the next decades. But the existence of fascism and Nazism, Furet notes, proved as fortuitous for communism as World War I had been. By the late 1920s, through Stalin's focus on "socialism in one country" and battles with Trotsky and other former heroes of the Revolution, the Soviet Union lost much of its appeal in Western Europe. Weakened on the homefront as well by the abysmal failure of collectivization and by the purges of millions of citizens, Stalin was forced to deflect attention to the external threat: The Soviet Union was the sole bulwark against fascism, and anyone who criticized it was offering aid to Hitler.

With anti-fascism as its cause, the Soviet Union was able to attract help. Indeed, the Spanish Civil War was offered as proof that the Communists were at the forefront of the fight against the fascists, and through "Popular Front" alliances with the Western European Left, non-Communist intellectuals added prestige to Stalin's tyranny. Even certain romantic Catholic intellectuals found Stalin's vision of community appealing. The 1935 Congress of Writers

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for the Defense of Culture—which sang the praises of Soviet humanism—featured such notables as Louis Aragon, André Malraux, André Gide, Heinrich Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Aldous Huxley, and E.M. Forster.

Stalin had done nothing to deserve the praise of these intellectuals or the sacrifices of the international brigades in the Spanish Civil War. And his subsequent actions quickly brought the Communist cause into disrepute. If reports of show trials and mass executions could be dismissed by Western intellectuals as fascist propaganda, Stalin's treaty with Hitler in 1939 could not. This event unmasked Stalin as an old-fashioned Russian tyrant bent on regaining the territories lost by Russia in 1918. Stalin's alleged hatred of fascism soon gave way to support for Hitler; the humiliated parties of the Third International were hard pressed to explain why they suddenly dropped their rallying cry of anti-fascism. The doubts that had kept fellow travelers from becoming full-fledged Communists came to the fore, and many felt that they had been Stalin's dupes.

But history came once again to the rescue of the Soviet Union, with the outbreak of the Second World War and Hitler's decision to invade Russia. Stalin was utterly unprepared to fight Hitler, having purged his elite military units in the late 1930s and ignored dozens of warnings before about the impending German attack in 1941. But he nonetheless reaped the benefits of the war. The defeat of fascism gave Marxism-Leninism a monopoly over the revolutionary spirit that began with the French Revolution, and the casualties of the war came to seem martyrs to the Marxist theology of history. With the defeat of Hitler, the Soviet Union earned unprecedented legitimacy in the West. The sacrifices of the Russian people helped cleanse the Soviets of their crimes in the eyes of the world. Communism, discredited after the Nazi-Soviet pact, was born again, and Western admiration reached its peak in the years after the Second World War.

Of course, this admiration was not shared by those in Eastern Europe who increasingly saw communism for what it was: just another name for Stalin's totalitarian command. So how were intellectuals in Paris and Rome able to bring themselves to deny the reality of Eastern Europe, deny the Gulag, declare Stalin the genius who understood the march of history and swear that proletarian science was coming into being?

The answer lies, in part, in the unhappiness of the intellectuals of Europe at the rising Cold War struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States, which foreshadowed Europe's own geostrategic decline. In the face of their shrinking influence, many found anti-Americanism easier to accept than anti-communism. Still scarred by the war, left-leaning intellectuals were anti-fascist, not anti-Communist. Loyal to Stalin because of "his" victory over Nazism, they mistook American anti-communism—caricatured as "McCarthyism"—as a form of the fascism that they saw as latent in liberal democracy.

WATCHING THEIR INFLUENCE SHRINK, MANY IN EUROPE FOUND ANTI-AMERICANISM EASIER TO ACCEPT THAN ANTI-COMMUNISM.

Stalin had managed to prolong the power of the revolutionary idea to his own benefit, but the willful ignorance of the Western Left to the true character of Stalinism was severely shaken by Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev. By denouncing Stalin's cult of personality and rehabilitating the "nationalist" Communists that Stalin had purged in his final years, Khrushchev was simply seeking to eliminate the excesses of Stalinism while keeping the Communist system firmly in place. But his efforts at incremental reform, like those of Mikhail Gorbachev more than three decades later, had consequences beyond his ken.

By allowing the intelligentsia to resurface, Khrushchev introduced the West to something it hadn't known: the anti-Communist intellectual, notably Alexander Solzhenitsyn. And when Khrushchev was forced to act in the old Stalinist mold, he lacked Stalin's prestige from World War II to support him. When, for example, in 1956, the Communists in Hungary could no longer control a workers' uprising, he had little choice but to seize the country. Khrushchev's actions were reminiscent of the worst days of Stalinism (including claiming the justification of "fraternal aid for the Hungarian working class battling counterrevolution"). The suppression of the Hungarian uprising deflated the Communist claim to moral superiority, and in the years that followed, the Western Left increasingly rejected the Communist idea as embodied in the Soviet Union.

The history François Furet lays out in *The Passing of an Illusion* tapers off dramatically after the Hungarian uprising, devoting just forty of its six hundred pages to the last three decades of the Soviet Union. But Furet does manage to highlight the paradoxes of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989: Communism, which claimed to be the final pronouncement of history, was condemned by history to vanish; communism is no longer the future of the liberal democracy it once claimed that it would inevitably both fulfill and supersede.

With *The Passing of an Illusion*, Furet has given us as his final gift a history that is comprehensive and compelling. To be sure, the book contains a few errors: Stalin did not tenaciously support Tito's claims to Trieste, nor was the tiff with Yugoslavia first crisis of communism outside Russia (after World War I, there were coups in Budapest and Munich; in 1939, the attempt at Communist control of Finland failed). So too, Furet might have strengthened his argument by a greater focus on Western Marxism outside France, especially in Italy.

Nevertheless, the book provides an insightful and accurate account of our century's illiberal past. And—with his warning that the end of the Soviets does not mean the revolutionary ideal will never well up again in liberal democracy—Furet's *The Passing of an Illusion* provides a reminder of how the discipline of history ought to work, how it can still work in the hands of a courageous master: a frank and impartial appraisal of the past to guide how we should live now. ♦

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For God's sake,

talk

PRESIDENT BEGS WIFE

"No more interviews..."

HILLARY GOES BAD

GEORGE W.: "F*** YOU!"

IMAGES OF DENNY HASTERT: THE SPEAKER AT PLAY

PLUS: Unsolved Mysteries of Monica's "Accident" David Beckwith Tells All Newt in Love Lamar Alexander's Country Life Gary Bauer's Secret Beach Photos Al Gore's Humorous Verse High as a Kite in Austin and non-fiction by Janet Cooke, Mike Barnicle, and Stephen Glass

SEPTEMBER 1999

Parody

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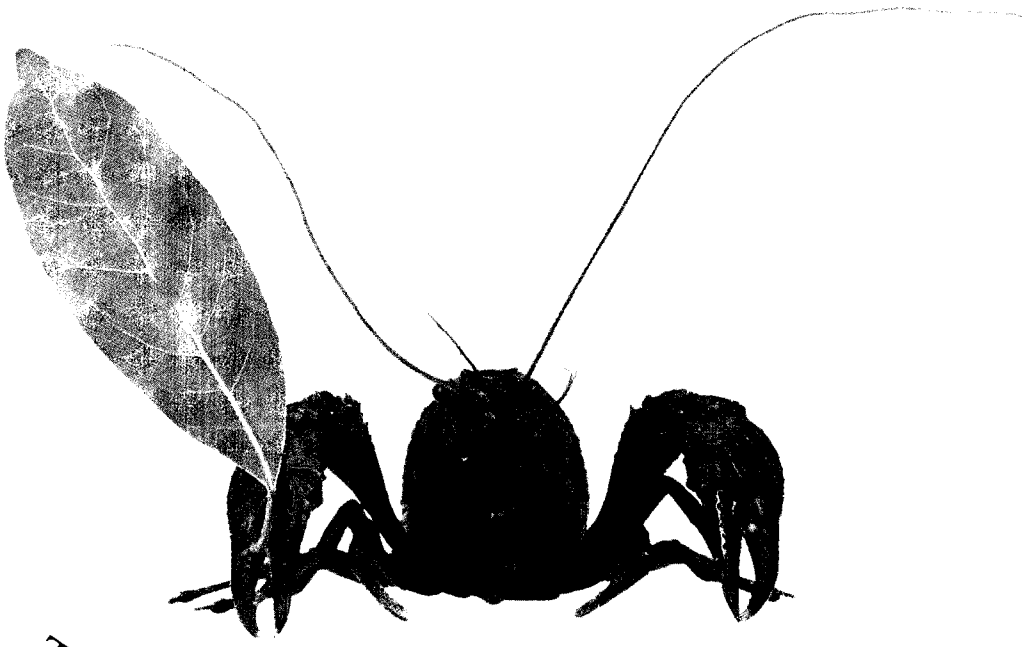

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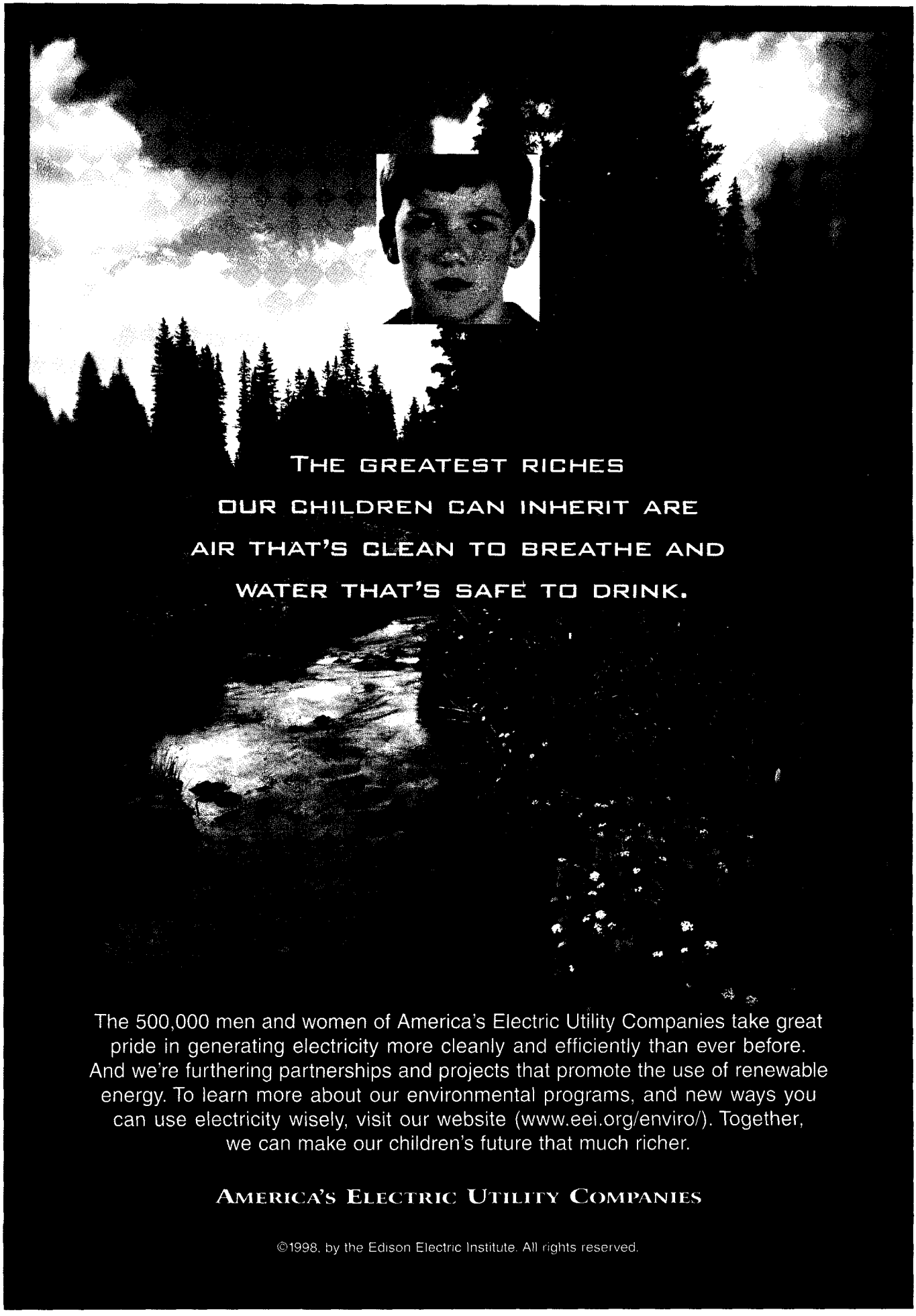

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